

LITURGICAL ARTS

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Editorials

THE twenty-first annual meeting of the Liturgical Arts Society was held on the evening of Monday, April 2, in the Parish Hall of Saint Ignatius Loyola Church, New York City. Last year the attendance was approximately two hundred and seventy-five and this year we can claim about four hundred. This year's topic was "The Problem of Decoration in Church Building," and the principal speaker was the distinguished artist, Joep Nicolas. It was unfortunate that another speaker, Emil Frei, of Saint Louis, could not be present because of illness. The general meeting was presided over by the distinguished architect, Charles D. Maginnis, the first president of our Society and a past president of the American Institute of Architects. The Reverend Francis M. Costello, consultant on decoration in the archdiocese of New York, attended the meeting as the personal representative of His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman, patron of the Society. The proceedings of the meeting appear in this issue.

Two new officers were elected at this meeting. Mr Thomas Locraft, of the firm of Murphy and Locraft, Washington architects, was elected vice-president. Mr Locraft is also head of the department of architecture at the Catholic University of Washington, D. C. Our valued collaborator, Mr Joseph P. Ascherl, was elected assistant secretary. Three directors were also elected: Mrs Hildreth Meiere, Mr Gerard L. Carroll and Mr Joseph S. Shanley. With these three directors we achieve a certain balance since Mrs Meiere is a distinguished mural painter, Mr Carroll is an

attorney-at-law, and Mr Shanley is an architect.

France alive . . .

Last November an important exhibition of French modern religious art and architecture was held in the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris. At about that time Mr Lamont Moore, director of the Yale University Art Gallery, conceived the idea of holding an exhibition of photographs of modern religious architecture in connection with a problem of church planning which the students of the school of architecture at Yale University were to solve as a part of their scholastic work. It often happens that such plans snowball far beyond the initial scope, and that has happened in this case. Thanks to Mr Moore's foresight a major part of the Paris exhibition was shipped to this country and the opening showing was at the Yale University Art Gallery on Wednesday, April 11. The exhibition lasted for a month, then on to Boston. Plans are being formulated for circulating the exhibition as far west as California, to return East by way of Denver and several important cities of the middle west. The tour will end on the eastern seaboard with a final showing in New York.

All members of the Liturgical Arts Society received invitations to the private opening and members outside the New York area will be advised as to when the exhibition will reach their section of the country. This important show is sponsored by the Direction Générale des Relations Culturelles, Paris, and the Cultural Division of the French Embassy, New York. It is pre-

sented in the United States under the auspices of the Liturgical Arts Society and will be circulated by the American Federation of Arts. Lest our friends assume that our Society can afford to sponsor in any way exhibitions of this kind without further ado, it must be explained that, thanks to the assistance of a friend of the Society who is a trustee of a foundation, we have been able to pay for the insurance of all exhibits from Paris to Paris, and thus we are closely associated with this particular exhibition. More about all this, with illustrations, will appear in our quarterly.

Ireland revisited . . .

Each year comes to this office *The Capuchin Annual*, ably edited by Father Senan, O.F.M.Cap. It will delight an Irishman's heart and should contribute to the enlightenment of those who cannot claim kinship to the Emerald Isle. In this year's *Annual* we have an excellent photographic record of an Irish pilgrimage to Rome for the Holy Year and several articles of definite interest to readers of LITURGICAL ARTS; for example, an article by our valued contributor, Clare Sheridan, in which she gives her impressions of her Holy Year pilgrimage; also "Memories of Our Pilgrimage" by Senator Margaret M. Pearse. And of particular interest is the portrait gallery of Irish personalities, with biographical notes. Irish humor is not left out, as the little drawing, next page, so well indicates.

Once upon a time . . .

"I am a man of great taste", said Father . . . as he promptly interfered



with everything being done by the artist to whom he had entrusted the job of decorating his church. "I do not approve of the colors you wish to use, and the fellow who painted my rectory agrees with me and he ought to know; he also sells wallpaper." By dint of tact and patience the artist managed to complete the work. The job is done, it is much admired and now Father . . . and his wallpaper friend claim the work as their own!

A quotation . . .

"To a great extent, indeed, the artist now occupies the place of the persecuted saint of another day . . . Ultimately art is concerned with one value and one value only: truth. But truth is an ethical value — perhaps the supreme ethical value. Modern art is unpopular because it has pursued this value to the exclusion of all sentiment and compromise. In painting, for example, it has discarded the shadow for the substance, the appearance for the form; in poetry it has rejected artifice and convention in favor of the rhythms of human speech; in fiction it has laid bare the psychological motives which determine our actions; and generally art has discovered that the imagination is an instrument of revelation, not an agent of obscurity. In modern art the public discovers an unfamiliar world; and many people draw back, frightened or resentful. But the new images, the new vision, cannot be dismissed; they are so much more vivid than the old way of seeing or hearing; they are so much more real. So gradually the public accepts them; it recognizes them as a necessary revelation. Art has thus achieved its ethical object, which is to persuade us to accept a true vision of the world." — The author, Herbert Read. The book: *A Coat of Many Colours*, chapter, "Art and Ethics."

Lectures . . .

Some months ago the director of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina, Mr Joseph Shields Hutchison, asked us to assist him in collecting paintings and sculpture for a proposed exhibition of religious art in the museum. The result was very interesting, and among the exhibits were seven of the small statues which formed part of the Society's "Statue Project." Among the painters and sculptors invited to participate were quite a few whose works had been illustrated in LITURGICAL ARTS. On Sunday, March 18, the

editor was invited to talk at the Museum on the problems which confront an artist and his client in this country. A very welcome opportunity. Another opportunity came through the National Sculpture Society in New York, on Tuesday, April 10. This time the topic bore on the more immediate problems of the sculptor in his unending search for a client. The most interesting time on such occasions is the question period; in Charlotte there were none (excepting friendly chats after the lecture), but the sculptors in New York had many questions and some of them very much to the point. On April 17 another opportunity came from Yale University where the editor was invited to talk to the students of the school of architecture. In this instance lantern slides were used. The topic bore on fundamental ideas with which the prospective architect must deal when planning a church. As for painting, sculpture, and all the other arts which come into play in a religious problem, the tie-up was based largely on a discussion of ideas brought forth by the exhibition of French modern religious art and architecture which opened at the Yale University Art Gallery, on April 11.

Conviction or necessity . . .

If conviction will not lead architects to sanity, necessity will force them to think otherwise than many have heretofore. In a recent issue of a Canadian paper a Toronto architect remarks: "Modern schools are being built with a sharp eye on the relative costs of materials . . . A new approach to building has been necessitated because some materials, long used in the erection of Gothic or Roman style, are no longer available, or are in short supply. Architects are trying to exploit materials to produce basic, simple styles. An extreme style is the proposal for a circular school, with classrooms on the outside and an auditorium in the middle, which could have a raised dome or ceiling to provide more light." Time marches on!

And Canada . . .

The Christian Art Guild of Canada has recently issued its first publication: a lecture given at Saint Michael's College, Toronto, by the Reverend C. B. Flahiff, C. S. B. on *Can Art be Christian?* The function of the guild is to promote interest in the arts of the Church and to bring to the notice of the Canadian clergy the work being done by contemporary artists in this field; also

to help artists realize the limitless scope and the joy of working for the beauty of the House of God.

The opportunity to call the attention of our readers to this new Canadian activity is all the more welcome since its promoters, Father Flahiff and Miss Marjory Nazer, are old friends of our own Society. Anyone interested can obtain further information from Miss Nazer, 28 Cranbrooke Avenue, Toronto.

In this issue . . .

We do not often receive unsolicited articles, but when Mr John Holly Scanlon sent in his appreciation of the church of Saint Francis Xavier, in Kansas City, it was very welcome since here was a member of that parish (one of the "people" we hear about) enthusiastic about a bit of the *new* architecture. Mr Scanlon's article, and the illustrations on page 68 may induce others to send in their comments. While in London, last August, the editor had occasion to discuss questions of art with Miss Iris Conlay, of the Ashley Gallery, and the result is the interview with two priests, a painter, an editor, and an art critic. While the comments of these friends do not settle the question of religious art in our times, they do stir up matters a bit, and perhaps some of our readers will have a clearer idea of the points at issue. The editor continues his diary which has elicited favorable comment. The work of the Society is becoming more and more interesting and we feel these daily events should be passed on to our readers. The book reviews and letters round out the issue.



Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting

April 2, 1951

General topic: "The Problem of Decoration in Church Buildings." Mr Joep Nicolas of New York City, worker in stained glass, painter and mosaicist. (Mr Emil Frei of Saint Louis, worker in stained glass and general decoration, was unfortunately not able to take part because of illness.) Mr Charles D. Maginnis, first president of the Liturgical Arts Society and a past president of the American Institute of Architects, presided at this meeting. The Reverend Francis M. Costello, consultant on decoration in the archdiocese of New York, attended the meeting as the personal representative of His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman.

Address of welcome by Mr Raphael Hume, president of the Liturgical Arts Society.

I WELCOME you, one and all, to this the twenty-first annual meeting of the Liturgical Arts Society. Father Costello is particularly welcome as he comes as the personal representative of His Eminence, our patron, and brings us a further indication of the Cardinal's continued interest and approbation. This approbation is highly valued and is of the utmost importance to this Society. Without it, it could hardly be said that we were in any way accomplishing our prime objective. We rejoice, therefore, and take great pride in his frequent assurances that we have his blessing on our work.

This, as you may remember, was well emphasized last spring when His Eminence invited a few of our members to attend him while he conferred upon our devoted secretary the medal *Benemerenti*, sent as a special award from His Holiness. Though this was a personal award, personally merited, I am sure we can look on it as a papal approval of our work to which Mr Lavanoux contributes such a great part of the effort.

In greeting this pleasantly large number of members I want also to bid a particular and cordial welcome to the many guests I see among them. For their information it might be well for me to say a word about the composition and objective of our Society. Its purpose is to promote the application of the arts

to the service of the liturgy of the Catholic Church.

We are not merely a group of artists organized to advance our own interests as such, or merely to extend the influence of the arts in their general application. These might be sufficient motives to justify the organization of a society. But our object is deeper and broader than that. We are organized to support the expressed desires of our Holy Father and his predecessors that the liturgy be conducted in accordance with rubrical requirements in sanctuaries and churches that are suitable and seemly, and are adorned with the dignifying beauty that the sacred majesty of the ceremonial demands.

Artists alone cannot accomplish this without the coöperation of the clergy who engage their services and direct them to a proper interpretation of liturgical requirements and usage; or without the interest and support of the laity who form the body of the Church and are, therefore, under obedience to the Pope to concern themselves in this work.

That is why it is necessary to our success that these three groups be represented in our membership. Since our work is a living one, it is necessary, too, that this membership keep ever growing. One important contribution that each of us can make is the invitation of new members into the Society from all three of these categories. Particularly from among the younger generation whose revivifying energy and fresher viewpoint will be needed to continue it into the future. I ask you all to coöperate in this.

The backbone of our effort is the publication of the Society, in which our ideas and ideals are expressed. Those of you who are familiar with this magazine are well aware of its quality and value. Those who are not would, I am sure, be gratified by subscribing to it. We undertake other special projects from time to time with emphasis on one or another phase of the arts.

The modest funds required for these activities are derived, in large part, from membership dues. Since we recently have been falling a little behind

in our budget, the corporate members decided this evening upon a slight increase of these dues. They are confident you will all recognize the necessity of this and that you will accept the adjustment cheerfully and as a matter of course, conforming to the trend of the times, just as we adjust ourselves to the changed slots in turnstiles and telephones. We expect that the increased revenue from these augmented dues and from the dues of the new members your efforts will bring to us will enable us to continue and increase our activities at the same high level that has been established for them in the past.

A further and vitally helpful source of revenue consists of generous donations in varying amounts from a number of benefactors, without which many of our most effective projects would not be possible. We are grateful for these contributions and trust others will be inspired to emulate these good benefactors.

It is now my pleasure to introduce the Cardinal's representative and to ask him to say a word in greeting. The Reverend Francis M. Costello, consultant on decoration in the archdiocese of New York.

FATHER COSTELLO. Several years ago the Cardinal purchased the White-law Reid property which is now the chancery office, across the street from the Cathedral on Madison Avenue. As each part of the building was undergoing alterations and the changes necessary for its new character, one of the buildings was chosen as the residence for the Vicar General and heads of various archdiocesan organizations. It was at this point, about a year ago, that I came into the picture of decoration and I recall that I tackled the job of fixing up the chapel in this residence. One day, as I was walking along Third Avenue, I stopped in a print shop and told the proprietor that I was in need of some kind of religious painting, about three feet by four feet. The proprietor of the shop replied: "We don't sell art by the foot." And that was my introduction to the problem I was to face.

Since that time I have sat on various committees for the decoration of churches, and although I cannot claim any special talent, I can at least lay claim to zeal for the beauty of the House of God. I am sure that zeal is your aim and purpose. The very fact that I have a position as consultant on church decoration in this archdiocese is proof that the Cardinal not only gives his approbation to such a group as the Liturgical Arts Society but that he is also vitally interested. I here extend the best wishes of His Eminence for the continued success of your organization and assure you that the Cardinal will remember the Society in his prayers.

Mr Hume then turned over the meeting to the presiding officer, Mr Charles D. Maginnis.

MR MAGINNIS: I am sensible of the honorable part you have given me in these proceedings. Obviously the Liturgical Arts Society is not unconscious of the piquancy of an octogenarian presence. But if it is to be loyal to its philosophical code, it should be warned against coquetting with antiquity. From the moment of its birth I have watched it through all its vicissitudes. Now that it has come to honorable security I easily recall how heavy was that primal anxiety which is never absent from the most spiritual of enterprises. Need it be said that this was money? How confidently could we depend on this reluctant commodity? The launching of a new society is a simple enough business, but the mission of this one could succeed only with a magazine as its educational instrument. Magazines are notoriously explosive and the warning echoes of catastrophe were even then resounding in the air of New York. But the founders were a courageous company. The difficulties were formidable but the cause compelling. The art of the Catholic Church in America must be brought to more thoughtful accomplishment.

For long it has been a puzzlement even to its friendliest critics that the great Church which had so enriched the tradition of Europe should here be content to accept a rendering that not unseldom bordered upon artistic illiteracy. In the immigration years, such unconcern could — not unfairly — be attributed to its preoccupations with the problems of nebulous and shifting populations. Till these were composed, the amenities could wait. But now that the Church had settled conservatively

into the national life, the time had surely come for art to resume its intellectual place in the ecclesiastical scheme, not with the hope of recapturing its ancient glories, but rather that it might here create, in another inspiration, no less significant symbols of its consequence. Within this persuasion was the belief that the American artist, absorbed till now by the secularities, could respond impressively to a religious challenge. The large matter was to win to the relation the interest of the Church itself which all too obviously is still confused by the violent shift in the aesthetic philosophy. It might readily enough be persuaded to the idea that its art could not exist forever under the tyranny of traditions, however venerable, but it was to be expected that it would cautiously await the demonstration before conceding the extraordinary principle that history may be severed by an amputation.

There was unlooked-for bitterness in the new logic. Architecture outlawed the imagination, turning its back upon the rhetorical graces and limiting itself to the sheer satisfaction of function. Painting and sculpture asserted no less violently their emancipation from the naturalistic by presenting modernism in a paradoxical archaeology. Within the arts there is even yet no common understanding as to the interpretation of the contemporary mind, nowhere the symptoms of orthodoxy. In these circumstances, however we continue to deplore its debilitating traffic with the commercial catalogue, the Church cannot reasonably be charged with inhospitality to the modern art. Indeed there are withal instances, both in Europe and America, where its discriminating patronage has come to admirable effect in the new idioms. What could be more eloquent of the official countenance of the Church than the signal honoring of our Society by the Holy Father and the distinction bestowed upon its secretary, whose exacting devotion through the years has well merited so remarkable a recognition, in the acknowledgement of which no one is more modestly aware than Maurice Lavanoux of the high place which Father LaFarge and Harry Lorin Binsse must occupy when the annals of this organization come to be written.

Our immediate interest this evening is directed to an absorbing topic: the decoration of the church. In its discussion, decoration will be given its liturgical dignity, withdrawn from the business

of mere visual gratification. The principal speaker is a distinguished craftsman and artistic philosopher who, with his gifted wife, came to the United States some ten years ago, after a notable record of accomplishment in Holland. In association with the Rambusch studios, and independently, he has already made a stimulating contribution to the decorative art of this country.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr Joep Nicolas.

MR NICOLAS: While our ears still ring with the Alleluia of the Resurrection, the jubilation for the mystery of rebirth and eternal life, I look forward to this other great solemnity crowning the liturgical year; Pentecost, the feast of the Holy Ghost. I like to quote two lines from that day's Gradual, which denote for what cause we are working, whose tools we are: "Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth."

Far beyond human wisdom, God's inscrutable counsels are revealed in these words, and equally implied in them is God's will to make use of whatever wisdom He granted His creatures in order to revive and remodel His own creation for His ultimate glory.

I once had a discussion with a practical minded priest, who, like so many others, held the opinion that religious art chiefly should stir the mind of the Christian as an aid to greater devotion and to more fervent prayer. I will not say that he was entirely wrong, but I cannot rest content with such a limited conception of purposeful beauty: the facts deny the reality of it. Many of the greatest saints have attained perfection and ecstasy without the help of any imagery or decoration, and it should be remembered that the use of images in the Church has caused many controversies long before the days of the Reformation and the Iconoclasts. On the other hand, many a great saint has been moved into mystical rapture by what, in his time, was a completely nondescript crucifix or statue, something which we would simply call a mass-produced devotional object. Against that we have few, if any, records of a direct connection between famous works of art and great contemplative stirrings caused by such in the mind of saints. So there must be also a more transcendent purpose to religious art than being a remedy against distraction in spiritual exercises.



Now let us not speak of *religious art* as if it were something different from *art*. I should not be able to believe in God's infinite greatness if I did not consider the purpose of all art, nay of all spiritual activity, as one and the same.

Be it theology, philosophy, literature, mathematics, or music; be it the science of language, history, chemistry, or physics; be it architecture, design, painting, or sculpture; there is only one superior conception of all this, the only one which defines its essentials and eliminates the non-essentials; it is expressed in these two lines: "Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created, And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth." Does the Kings of Kings have to explain why He delights in His creation and the continuation thereof? Should He apologize if, in the narrow view of His creatures, things are done which look like a waste of energy, of time and — dare we say the sordid word — like a waste of money? For Him, who created a universe out of nothing, there is no waste. He who owns everything does not have to bargain. So God delights in having His creatures do some creating of their own, and that is why it says in Genesis: "He created man in His own image." Here is man's greatest title to nobility, and all human activities can be rated to the extent to which they contribute to the perpetual recreation of the world.

Now you will say: "This is very vague; come down to the facts; here we are discussing the problem of church decoration." I grant you that I have not yet proved much, except two important things. (1) Our problem is not solved by economic pragmatism. (2) Our problem is not solved by reactionary conservatism.

Here is our task: to recreate the church buildings; to renew them as part of continued creation. The question poses itself: How is this renewal done and what laws or rules, if any, are there to follow? There are no simple laws, but from logic and sound experience some valid rules can be drawn up. We should do nothing to the detriment of the purpose of a church; nothing which would not be in accordance with the liturgical and devotional services celebrated therein. For this reason the Sacred Congregation of Rites has established certain requirements. If we live up to these and for the rest follow our inspiration, we shall do well, provided we have the ability to realize our inspiration. Now what is inspiration? It is the "Spiritus" who sets us in motion. Granted that we have no pure spiritual action, because we are a "mixtum compositum," a soul chained to a body, we can define inspiration as an interaction of accumulated experiences and

of non-conformist desire. The experiences come to us through our senses and are stored in our memory; they teach us about human behavior, human reaction to revelation; they also teach us about former creative activity; about the achievement in the spiritual domination of matter, briefly called "acquired technical abilities." Not content with storing these experiences, a great desire arises from the individual apartness of each human being, the greatest gift for creation. Out of this the new shapes are born, the new emotions, new joys, new wonders. And we have to draw the line clearly between these accumulated experiences and the vision of the new forms taking shape. If an artist has all the knowledge of tradition; if he has all the skills acquired by centuries of craftsmanship, but he lacks the nostalgia of his own soul, this pining for greater directness, for a more articulate enunciation of his emotion, he will be an eclectic resumer, an anthological transmitter of historical riches into new and protracted service. He will not be entirely useless, he might be a valuable link between culture and evolution. But he risks being like a scion of noble lineage; seldom do they live up to the standards of their forbears.

So we bet on those who do things in their own right, who stand up for a personal and timely expression of their feelings toward the eternal truth of revelation. And now I have to condemn another category of so-called artists. It is that numerous group of "me too" modernists, who heap abuse on the traditionalists because it seems smart. They themselves have been struck by some genuine achievements of original talent, and eagerly they take over some of the external characteristics of conspicuously successful innovations, without having felt any of the essential emotions which prompted these characteristics. They are just thieves of things which they cannot handle, and their work, in the long run, will show hollow rhetoric and ham-actor exaggeration. To this category belong the "stylizers and simplifiers"; those of the ballet gestures and of the slipcover saints; those of the streamlined stations of the Cross; those of the pure sandpaper sculpture and the gooseneck exaltations.

What then can we do, as artists, to be what we should be: the interpreters of genuine religious emotion in our time? I shall say that this is not a question of making a decision, or of pushing hard for a mentally controlled attitude. Being

an artist is like being a tree bearing fruit. A tree cannot make itself anything else but what it is; it just has to grow. The earth must be good, the tree must be of a good variety. The pruning must have been well done; the climate must be suitable. All this the artist, like the tree, must have received before he starts bearing fruit. It is a grace, a gift from God. It also confers a great responsibility. Now the artist has to work, to think, to live, to pray, and to work again. He has to master many skills, and those can only be acquired by ceaseless practice. Skills are born only out of a dialogue between mind and matter, and matter does not start speaking back the first years you handle it. The artist works with matter not for the sake of matter, but because without it he cannot transmit freely and directly any spiritual value. He works with tools and materials, as they come in his time. The invention of oil glazes by Jan van Eyck, transmitted to Italy by Just of Ghent, was probably greatly instrumental in the flowering of oil painting during the Cinquecento and Seicento.

In recent times the availability of benzine sensibly influenced the painting of French impressionists and post-impressionists. I, in my days, am greatly indebted to plastic lacquers, to new tempera formulae, to sprayguns and compressors.

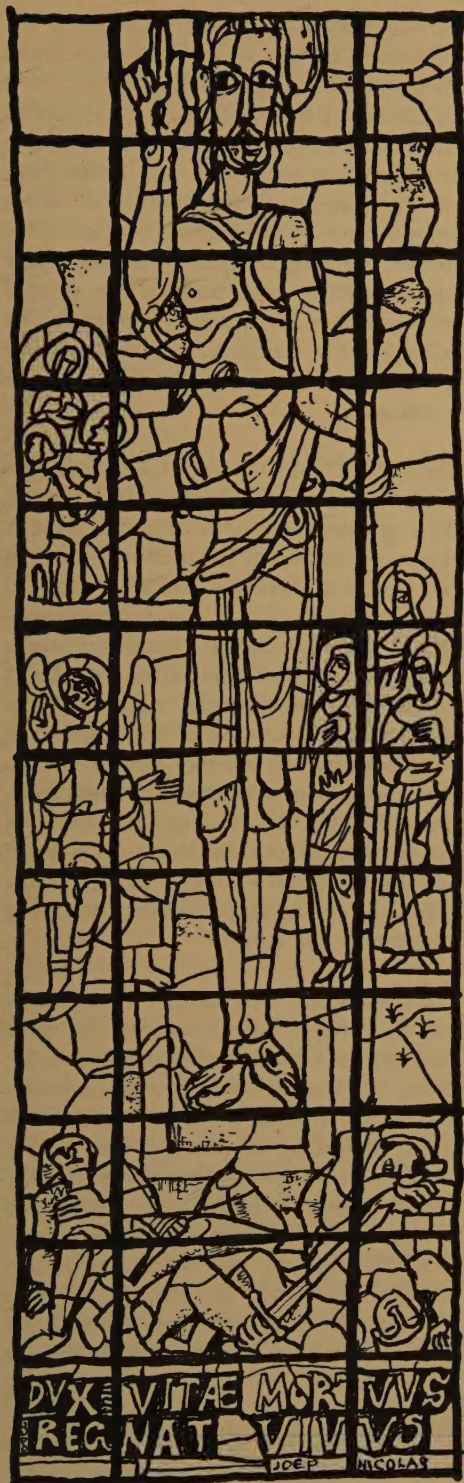
But there are other things equally important, maybe more important, which determine the modern ways of creation. Not only the continuous expansion of technical means constitutes a basic evolution, but from year to year conditions and requirements change. Social and economic structures crumble and grow, change and evolve, and all these things determine our ways of working, our possibilities and limitations. The economy of this country has almost eliminated the individual artist in the field of important contracts for church work. I have experienced that which in Europe is possible but has almost become impossible here. Aware of the fact that no artist in this country can combine creative activity with the involved business of "selling" himself, I have been happy to find myself gradually absorbed into a free interaction with one of the large organizations who have combined so well the facilities for producing and for promoting. One important commission after the other was entrusted to me, my mind and hands were kept from rusting. And this is the most important thing to an artist: to be con-

tinuously busy; without that he loses his hand. Against this great advantage of being kept in continuous production, I had to acquiesce to minor disadvantages. Sometimes a low budget and high aims have put our ingenuity to the test. If one knows the whole job and if one is not too inhibited, much can be attained by directness and spontaneity. There are other disadvantages, not without a silver lining. In our days, when every amateur, every freak, fake, and phony, is written up and publicized, it is a little humiliating to be kept out of the lime-light entirely, and to find that of the good things one does nobody has seen a line, but just the far distant client. This client had ordered and bought our work from the promoting organization, whose big name has been before his eyes for years and years, in every publication, well advertised, well written up, well glamourized. This name, to him, means a sort of guarantee, gives him a feeling of security. Why should he care about the individual artist, who sweats out his soul on these things? This artist also knows that the promotor would be able to sell any mediocrity as well as his best work. The difference hardly would be noticed as long as it is covered by a good trademark.

If he is a real artist, he will take advantage of this by doing just a little better than the level of sellability, he will slip in a little more daring, a little bolder treatment; the difference will not be noticed. If he is a weak and not a very honest man, he might let himself slide off into mediocrity, thereby risking his own happiness. But the difference will not be noticed. Mediocrity sells as well, nay, sometimes better, than the extreme personal work of a high-strung mind. The detriment caused to the name of the promotor of this deterioration will only be discovered after a score of years or so. To avoid such dangers, would it not be better if promotors adopted the system of the agents in the free art trade? By building up their artists under their own name and letting them keep their responsibility? I do not think it makes much difference. How many a good artist have I seen fallen into sordid routine after his name had been well-trumpeted about, and what of the artist's nightmare of personal appearances, repetitious talks, cheap personal legends, hypocritical flattery for the perusal of cranks, critics, and art manipulators of every description? Having had ample opportunity during my lifetime to take cognizance

of such miseries, I find it now quite useful to work and study in the shadows. I enjoy being kept incommunicado. It is not pleasant to have to talk to strangers, always about the same things, on a rather amateurish level, for such is the conversation which recurs time and again, and which brings in the job. What a blessing it is to find people who take such chores from our shoulders! If we are afraid that posterity would take our works for being someone else's, we should reason thus: Our works are worth posterity's consideration if they bear such a personal character that it will be easy to recognize them. If this does not satisfy us, we might bequeath a list of our works to some reliable agency, let us say the Liturgical Arts Society or the Metropolitan Museum of Art. And then, what do we care about the opinion of posterity anyway? Vain glory should not keep us from working as well as possible. A name can be bought, a genius cannot be bought.

I could quote many happy instances where, from the first moments, understanding was reached about the entire concept of an ensemble, and I believe I have carried some substantial works to a more than satisfactory conclusion. The important factor was that the vision of the artist had been solicited from the outset. But, obviously, a promotor sometimes cannot sell a job without committing himself as far as the subject matter goes, the placing of compositions and the medium and such basic data. It might sometimes happen to work out extremely well, sometimes the adaptation of this data will not be easy. A promotor with a good cultural background, with well-founded knowledge and years of experience, usually has quite good ideas, but there is one thing he does not have. He lacks the continuous contact with the matter, the tools, their evolution, and the possibilities which from there on instill in the artist a desire for new realities. If the promotor had these elements at his disposal at the moment he is outlining a project, he might be more instrumental in creating a work of art. Too often a prospective client will tell him: "I saw such or such a job, please do more or less the same for me." Since it is his great burden and responsibility to provide his organization with work to do, he may easily give in to such requests, instead of fighting for a better conception, and then still see the commission slip over to some more compliant competitor. It is an inherent danger in the present



and, till now, quite workable system. That is why an artist often dreams great dreams about what he could have done with some job, if it had not been determined, to some extent, before it reached him.

And here is another string which ties the artist down in many cases. No matter how laden with personal vision he may be, he has to coördinate, if not subordinate, his conceptions to the architecture which provides the framework for his decoration. Some people

hold the opinion that an artist has the right to do what he likes in old churches, because in history it has been like that. Renaissance and baroque decorations have been superimposed on gothic buildings and we may love it. But I have seen many examples in Europe where quite outspoken modern work has been done in churches of the past, and I have not seen one example where it worked out entirely well. In my younger days I have risked such things myself; I shall never forget four windows which were refused and afterwards turned up in a museum. That was good publicity but it was not a solution. So there we are back to the fact that we must consult some instinct called taste as to how far we can go with originality in connection with architecture. Christ has said: Neither do they put new wine into old bottles. I would like to apply this to our problem.

But we have also been bored to death with that moldy cliché: stained glass is the handmaiden of architecture. I have no knowledge of who invented such a miserable metaphor, and I am going to rewrite it for better use: stained glass is one of the most entertaining and most valuable lady companions to architecture. This worthy lady might as well be consulted from time to time, just as her other companions, painting and sculpture, are consulted. But, of course, if dame architecture cannot be persuaded to abandon her black lace dresses of Bostonian restraint, it does not behoove her lady companions to don the most daring creations by the house of Christian Dior or, for that matter, Balenciaga! So take heed, dame dowager; drop that title; be only Mrs Architecture; we will make you chairman of the board, but we must be considered, if not consulted — we are no longer your handmaidens.

How often have I prayed that a man like Clemens Holzmeister or Neimeyer would turn up and talk over things one could do together. Till now my prayer has not been heard, and I am still praying for an audacious architect who would go in for daring decoration. I have known a few in Europe, and I have been able to do things which they liked. But now the years pass by fast; some of our dreams are in a rare museum, in a rare private residence, in some public buildings, in a very few churches. But many dreams are stored in warehouses or in attics.

One of my dreams was shown at the great Holy Year exhibit in Rome. I did

not send it there, neither was I asked for it. Without my knowledge or volition, it had been sent there by the museum of modern religious art in Utrecht, the Netherlands. I discovered it reproduced in the illustrated catalogue. The reproduction looked at me and stirred old memories, and I felt like somebody who has been dead for a while. So let me speak to you as a dead man, for if I were alive I fear I should be killed for what I am going to say.

Why is it that in small, poor countries, a more audacious attitude can be noticed, whereas, here, the greatest possibilities are sometimes botched or whittled down to timid manifestations? I do not think we can blame the public for this; I do not think we can blame the clergy. I think the fault lies in our terrible efficiency. Everything is so well thought out, so well calculated. Risks are eliminated radically and have to be avoided because they would jeopardize our very existence. We are caught in the web of our own organizations. A too heavy crust of administration covers the magma of the spirit, where the primordial forces burn up their energy; no eruption can come to the surface. Many times I have been told by customers: we like to deal with big organizations; they eliminate risks. If they eliminate risks, they probably also eliminate the one risk which is worth taking: to attain a sublime work of original art.

Have we all become cautious, soft-spoken citizens, afraid of damaging our business if we do not cater to the lowest common denominator? Have we forgotten Saint Francis's folly, or do we not know that great god *Calculus*, whom we worship for the benefit of our organizations? We should recognize that he is an insidious reincarnation of Mammon. Let us get wise and look the truth in the eye, lest one day *Calculus* burn up the soul of his worshippers, as Mammon never failed to do.

We need the big organizations badly, because the social and economic structure of our era makes them necessary. But let those who run them take heed and see to it that provisions are made which will allow for experimentation, study, research, and renewal by their artists. Let them see to it that the flame of freedom and spontaneity shall not be smothered, that flame of the Holy Ghost without which no man can renew even the tiniest spot on the face of the earth.

At this point Mr. Maginnis asked the Secretary of the Society to take over the question and answer period.

MR OTTO SPAETH. I would like to say that I was much impressed with the talk by Mr Nicholas. It is seldom that a speaker stops too early, but the speaker this evening, as far as I am concerned, did. I would like to ask this question: Did I really understand that you never had the experience of working on a project with the architect as coördinator and guiding spirit, along with the other artists involved.

MR NICOLAS. Yes, I enjoyed that experience several times in Holland, also in Belgium, not only in church buildings but also in business buildings, city halls. On those occasions the architect would say: I have this space. What should I put there? And we worked out the problem together. But I have had only one such experience in this country, when a past president of the Liturgical Arts Society, Mr J. Sanford Shanley, asked me to design and execute a window for a small church he had built in Chester, New York. [See illustrations of this church in the August, 1950, issue of LITURGICAL ARTS.] Another opportunity came some years ago from Father Robert Gannon, S.J., at that time President of Fordham University. Father Gannon had asked the Secretary of the Liturgical Arts Society to take care of the decoration of the chapel of the downtown section of Fordham University, 320 Broadway. Mr Lavanoux discussed the matter with me before a line was drawn, and the work was done with the coöperation of all concerned — client, artist, and architect. But most of the time all I see are the blueprints and I have no direct contact with architect or client.

MISS GRACE MULLINS. I would like to ask Mr Lavanoux if he feels that the church goods houses try to improve the quality of their product; or what can be done about present conditions.

MR LAVANOUX. To the first question I would answer: I do not think so. To the second I can only recall what I thought about this fifteen years ago. At that time I was under the impression that I had a fairly good solution. One of the members of the church goods fraternity urged me to give some practical suggestion instead of continued criticism. Fair enough. I then suggested

that I be invited to address the church goods convention — at that time it was to be held in New York — and this is what I proposed to tell them. My plan, of course, was to apply to the industry as a whole and not only to particular firms, since the good intentions of some might be put to a disadvantage if other sources of supply were to continue manufacturing and selling the usual items. I planned to urge the members assembled in convention to appoint someone whom they trusted as czar of their industry. That person would have full facility to study the existing supply of items in the shops and warehouses and to work out a plan of replacement over, say, a period of fifteen years. Each year items of questionable value would be discarded and the moulds destroyed. Then artists would be commissioned to execute objects to replace the discarded ones. Over a period of fifteen years it seemed to me that all questionable objects would be out of the picture and without financial loss to the church goods people. Need I say that I was not invited to speak at the convention, and now I don't think my plan would have worked anyway. One solution, as I see it, is for the public, the clergy, the architects, to insist on better work and patronize artists. But the real solution lies in competition through the creation of a new firm which would create an entirely new line of needed objects, in limited reproduction.

Q Does not the architect to-day have a special problem with respect to sculpture? In view of modern construction methods, the use of steel, there does not seem to be much sense in the use of sculpture as an integral part of the building.

A. Even with present day structural methods it would seem possible to integrate sculpture in the building rather than have it as something added on. It would be for the architect to work out the problem. For example, the method of building in reinforced concrete, as adapted by such architects as Auguste Perret in France, would make it possible for sculpture to become an integral part of the structure itself.

FATHER COSTELLO. I would like to say a few words concerning the place of murals in the sanctuary. I have had occasion a few times to outlaw murals in new churches. In fact I think that one of them was a mural to be executed

by Mr Nicolas. For the most part, the architects in the New York area seem to feel that we should have some kind of mural in the sanctuary. It seems to me that a large sanctuary mural makes it difficult to carry out the instructions of the Sacred Congregation of Rites relative to a baldachino or a tester above the altar. I don't rule out altar pieces, of the type now in the chapel of Fordham University (uptown), or some kind of hanging, etc. But to have a flamboyant mural seems to me to be a mistake.

MR NICOLAS. I would agree if the mural were of the flamboyant variety. The quintessence of a mural is that it does not pop out of the wall; you always *feel* the wall. Murals are not work of plastic art; they are not three-dimensional. We have had such a great tradition of murals in sanctuaries that I am horrified at the thought that they can be excluded by anyone. Nor can I see why murals should be outlawed because of rulings of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. It all depends how the job is planned and executed. It is quite possible to plan a mural and a baldachino or a canopy without running counter to any rule.

MR BANCEL LAFARGE. It seems to me that this debate indicates the wide channel that exists between the creative artist, whether he be a painter, a sculptor, or an architect, and the public at large, including the clergy. The job at hand is to try to bridge that gap, and would it not be possible to get at the young while in their formative years? I would like to ask Father Costello whether artists of the calibre of Joep Nicolas are often invited to talk to seminarians about these matters? Would it be possible?

FATHER COSTELLO. It is certainly simple to arrange to have men like Mr Nicolas address the seminarians. But the real difficulty is elsewhere. The men in the seminary no doubt have ideals of the highest, but they are about thirty-five years removed from the practical questions we have raised here. By the time they become pastors, they are not inclined to worry too much about murals or decoration in general.

When I used the word flamboyant in relation to murals I had in mind the work of certain studios of "church decoration," and if you look at the advertising section of the Catholic Di-

rectory you will see color reproductions of the type of work I referred to a moment ago. The type of mural that our friend this evening would give us would certainly be of the highest quality.

And when we discuss the question of prices, we find that it is largely ninety-five percent business and five percent art. I think we have to work on that five percent and get over to pastors and the people the fact that good artists are with us and that they need not be too expensive.

MR ROBERT RAMBUSCH. I agree with Father Costello about the difficulty of placing a tester in some churches, but isn't that because some of us behave like *prima donnas*? The man who is executing the mural demands that it be seen without obstruction; the man who is doing the tester makes his own demands. The fact that a mural exists as a thing of beauty is sufficient. It might be partially obstructed by a tester, but that it exists is enough for the glory of God.

MR NICOLAS. There may be difficulty in improving some of the badly designed and overloaded churches in this country, but we can make a virtue out of necessity by peeling off non-essentials and then not spoiling what is left. Do as little as possible, but do it with feeling. We should abstain from one thing which is the foe of all art, and that is to establish too severe and binding rules. What counts in creation is enthusiasm. For example, the mediaeval people did things in art which we could call crazy to-day if we saw them done, but those "enthusiastic moments" of the past often are sheer beauty.

In such matters logic is not always so obvious. There is one logic which stems from the whole human being and which involves all feeling. There is another logic which is the cold logic of the man who has learned a few rules. The logic of feeling and intangible qualities can produce great art, but the fellow who sticks strictly to the rules but without talent will produce nothing worth while. We must be fearful of too many restrictions, and we should encourage creative power.

THE SECRETARY. Here is a question that may lead to controversy with many of my friends engaged in the production of stained glass windows. I have long claimed that the craft of

stained glass has become somewhat static. It has fed for so long on past glories that the work of the majority of the shops — there are exceptions — is a copy of a copy of a copy. My craftsmen friends have often told me: let the architects give us modern buildings and we will give them modern windows. And that is the trouble. When you say: I will do modern work, you really mean I will get on the bandwagon because it might be good business. But why not be yourself and let it go at that, without any label? In cases where some of our best craftsmen have been confronted with the opportunity, the result has been a streamlining of mediaeval forms. It seems to me that a solution would be a clear and — to use a much abused word — a creative approach. To this end I suggest that painters be brought into the design and making of windows. And I refer to painters who so far have not done any such work but whose present work indicates a possibility of adapting their technique to glass, within the normal discipline and basic requirements of the craft. And since names usually make an impression, I will mention names. I will not mention our speaker as I still don't know how he feels about all this, but I will mention André Girard, Theodore Brenson, Pepino Mangravite, in the United States; Jean Manessier, in France; Roy de Maistre, in England. And there are others. To put this suggestion to a test I hope to find someone who might underwrite such a project; the Stained Glass Association of America would select five of their members to design and execute a window destined for a modern church; then five painters would be invited to do the same. These ten artists would be paid an adequate fee (at least enough to cover their expenses); the subject matter of the window would be determined; also the size. Beyond that, no further conditions. Then an exhibition — the Stained Glass Association entries in one room; the painters in another. Then each of us would have an opportunity to form an opinion.

MR NICOLAS. I think the idea is excellent, but why restrict it to painters? why not also invite doctors and lawyers — in fact, anyone who might have an original idea?

MR HAROLD RAMBUSCH. If I remember well, about ten years ago, the Secretary sent me a magazine in which

I found photographs of windows in a new church in Lisbon, Portugal (Our Lady of Fatima). At any rate, I made a special trip to see this church and I found the windows to be among the finest I had ever seen. When I finally located the artist, I found that he was a painter. He told me he had been a dancer in the cabarets of Paris and that he painted religious pictures. He told the architects he had never designed windows, but he designed these and they were among the loveliest I have ever seen.

THE SECRETARY. Of course, I refer to painters who would make the design and also actually do the painting on the glass.

Note: It so happens that one of our members, Mr Stephen Bridges, editor of *Stained Glass*, the publication of the Stained Glass Association of America, has published in the Winter, 1951, issue, a symposium concerning the windows in the church at Assy, France. (This church was described and illustrated in the February, 1951, issue of LITURGICAL ARTS.) Three questions were put to his collaborators. (1) Which of the windows, if any, are good? (2) Do they deserve study by American glass men? (3) What do you feel is their position in the history of the craft in the light of the traditions of the best work of the past and the present?

Mr George D. Merrill of George D. Merrill and Associates, of Los Angeles, says that his first impression was: "Well, we are returning to the caveman's art, the initial effort of primitive man." But he added that the window designed by Rouault, depicting a sorrowful Christ, showed strength and originality surpassing all other windows portrayed in *Life* magazine. He added that "harmony in color and design is after all our prime goal, be it lifelike picture window or the more abstract design." Mr Merrill thought that American glass men should study the windows in the Assy church as well as all other momentary trends in design. As to their position in the history of the craft . . . it was his opinion that Rouault's window may come to be accepted as an outstanding contemporary window.

Mr Conrad Pickel, of Waukesha, Wisconsin, admits that it is difficult for him to judge of windows only from illustrations in LITURGICAL ARTS and *Life*. He feels "The windows are outstanding insofar as being 'original' in their conception. For choice in color, I would choose Father Couturier's Angel Raphael and for lead design Paul Bony's Saint Peter." While admiring the daring of the European artists, Mr Pickel does not feel that craftsmen in this country should follow European "modernism." He considers this type of art "jazz" and likely to be short-lived.

Mr Emil Frei, of Saint Louis, Missouri, strikes a more hopeful note and offers a few critical remarks. To him Rouault's "Sorrowing Christ" is, by far, the best piece of work, "but it is too much a Rouault painting put into glass and therefore, even though I would accept it as the greatest single piece, I cannot accept it fully as a stained glass window which, after all, it is meant to be." Although he feels it is

FATHER LAFARGE. I have no questions to ask. I would just like to say a word of appreciation to our guest speaker. We have had discussions of this kind at former meetings, but this one has been one of the most pleasant and enlightening. I was intensely interested in what Father Costello said about mural paintings in the sanctuary because that problem is a very real liturgical one. It is akin to the problem we discussed last year with regard to the planning of the sanctuary, with the altar and the ceremonies as the keynote. As far as glass is concerned, we are surely confronted with a practical problem, and I am glad it was brought up. I happen to be the son of a painter who also produced windows, and I feel it is certainly possible as far as the painter is concerned.

One thought occurs to me as we come to a close. We shall be reciting the beautiful office of Compline, and this evening there is the wonderful conjunction of two feasts. We know the beauty in the sky when two stars join, and we have two planets in the heaven of the ecclesiastical calendar: The Feast of the Annunciation which is closing and the Feast of Saint Joseph which occurs to-morrow, and both of them against the background of Easter.

The life of Mary, the faithful handmaid of the Lord, and the life of Saint Joseph seem to illustrate some of the points which were brought up this evening. Neither Mary nor Joseph had rules to guide them. They, of course, had the great landmarks of the Old Testament, landmarks of the law, land-

marks of God's commandments, and they had the great fundamental landmark of Love. But to guide them in the details of their life they had to depend on the creative force of the Holy Spirit performing its marvelous work in creating in each of them a world of sanctity and beauty which has enthralled all generations and will make all generations call Mary Blessed, and all generations honor her spouse, the foster father of the Saviour.

Now that wonderful spirit of liberty, guided by the Holy Ghost, is akin to the spirit which Mr Nicolas brought out so well in his talk this evening. Our problem is ultimately one of liberty, and a great fundamental problem of our time in using that liberty which God has given us. There are no rules — no exact details — for liberty. There are

guidances, there are limits beyond which we cannot go, but the precise rules must come from the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

I am fully in accord with Mr Nicolas when he emphasized the great need for spontaneity and creativeness. That, I feel, is what we need, and many of the problems we wrestle with in the Liturgical Arts Society will be greatly alleviated and ultimately solved by the development of that spontaneity.

And so, with Mary and Joseph as our patrons and *Dirige Domine* as our motto, I think we can look forward to a very prosperous year for the Society, under the guidance and leadership of our newly elected officers and directors.

Following the singing of Compline the meeting adjourned at 10.40 p.m.

Art and the Parish

JOHN HOLLY SCANLON

THE PARISH of Saint Francis Xavier in Kansas City, Missouri, has built a new church. It is an evolutionary production, a fish-shaped structure of steel, concrete, and cut stone. But it is more, much more than a beautiful and unusual building, it is the result of some twenty years of prayer, work, dreams, sacrifice, and planning. And it

is an evidence of the faith of the members of the congregation in the ability of our culture to produce beauty expressed in architecture. Its existence draws together one of the oldest Christian symbols, the *Ichthus*, and the technical achievement of our mechanical society. It gives expression to the measure of the ability of our artists to unite the

well for American artists to study these windows Mr Frei adds: "To me in all these windows the painter is too apparent and the craftsman only incidentally present." While he holds that these windows are closer to the glass in LeMans cathedral than to the transparent pictures of the late renaissance, he states that, in his opinion, "they fail to measure up to the work of the best periods in stained glass primarily because one senses no real integration. They are still representative of individualism."

Mr Robert Rambusch finds that, at Assy, "the contemporary artists have rededicated their talent, as did the great masters of the past," and he adds what is probably the lesson to be drawn from the Assy windows: "Assy's contribution to the living tradition of stained glass will probably go down in history — not that I mean to suggest that Assy will replace Chartres — but rather that it is preparing the way for what will take its place, with Chartres, as a living expression of our Christianity."

Mr Orin E. Skinner, president of The Charles J. Connick Associates, of Boston, takes a rather sarcastic view of all this. He is amused "to note how the easel painter never quite leaves off making pictures, no matter how

frantically he outlines and disguises them with lead." He pounces on Father Douaire's statement concerning Picasso's remark (LITURGICAL ARTS, February, 1951) ". . . the original work of art is often ugly," but he fails to add Picasso's closing thrust: ". . . its imitators can make it pretty." Nor does he state Father Douaire's closing sentences: "Assy is perhaps most significant for what can come of it. Not pretty imitation, certainly, but fresh inspiration."

Mr Henry Lee Willet, of Philadelphia, first expresses amazement that Father Douaire should have ". . . the temerity to write an appraisal of a building so novel, with so many different arts and crafts embellishing its most unusual architecture" since he was at Assy only for an afternoon. I was at Assy with Father Douaire for about five hours and found it quite possible to have an idea of what the building represented — at least enough to write a short article about it. Moreover Father Douaire and I had already talked matters over with Father Couturier, we had met Rouault and Bony, etc. At any rate we actually *saw* the windows, and it is perhaps exaggerated of Mr Willet to assume that Father Douaire and I acted the part of the hit and run tourists. But Mr Willet does say:

"I would most emphatically and enthusiastically state that they do deserve study by American stained glass artists. It is mandatory for workers in stained glass to give thought to modern and fresh approaches to their medium if they are to survive, and I endorse the stained glass at Assy for its modern, fresh contribution to the craft."

Mr Len Howard, of Kent, Connecticut, is the severest critic of all. With a bow to the fact that he bases his strictures on the illustrations in *Life* magazine he is of the opinion that "none of these windows can be called good" but he does concede dramatic qualities and good composition to Rouault's Sorrowing Christ. And although he says he would go to Assy to see the windows if he were in the vicinity of the place he doubts whether the windows "deserve any great study by American or other glassmen". And to sum up he writes ". . . it would seem to me that these windows, possessing as they do, only that prime requisite for publicity, namely novelty, actually occupy a very minor position in the field of stained glass produced in our time." That's that!

So — keep this copy of LITURGICAL ARTS and read all this again in fifteen years.

GUIDO CADORIN VENICE



Pietà
Shown at the international exposition, Venice, 1950

Saint John the Baptist





(Above) Chalice in cloisonné enamel, made in 1950 for Alma College, Alma, California. The subject depicted is the Tree of Life. The base is generally green in color, the node, blue, and the cup ranges from orange-red to clear blue green at the top. The detail indicates the exquisite workmanship. (Left) Paten, also decorated in cloisonné enamel. (Right) Pectoral cross in gold and enamel.



THE BROM STUDIOS

TRECHT

NETHERLANDS

(Below) Saint John the Baptist, handchased in copper. (Right) Reliquary of Saint Francis of Assisi, silver and partly gold plated. The base shows birds and fishes. The chalice is silver, gold plated, decorated with cloisonné enamel. The base depicts the Holy Family, angels on lower portion of the cup. The node is of topaz.



DUNSTAN PRUDEN

ENGLAND

Dunstan Pruden was apprenticed in 1921 to a London goldsmith, Morton Crookes, who lived in his studio and who made hand vessels and ornaments for the London shops. Here Pruden met Ralph Wallace, a young journeyman, who had been apprenticed to a silversmith box-maker and was now working for Crookes to gain experience in wrought work and chasing. They set up a studio together in Hammersmith. At that time, as the result of an award of a scholarship in silversmithing, Pruden became a student at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London, to study under Harold Murphy, the greatest silversmith of his time. Later Pruden met Eric Gill as the result of an address on Gill's work he delivered to G. K. Chesterton's Distributist League. It was Gill, more than anyone, who helped make his work known. Dunstan Pruden was received into the Church in 1931 at the Carmelite Convent in Kensington. In 1932 he was able to realise a long-formed ambition to work in the country. He now lives in Burgess Hill, Sussex, where all his important work is done. He is head of the goldsmithing section of the Brighton College of Arts and Crafts, England. His work is well represented in the cathedrals, abbeys, and churches of England as well as in colleges of Oxford, Cambridge, and London Universities. He has work in Rome, Lisbon, and Madrid.



Cast silver crucifixes,
in limited reproduction





SILVER CHALICES



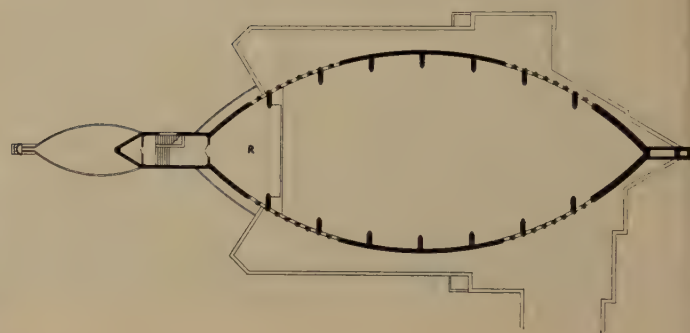
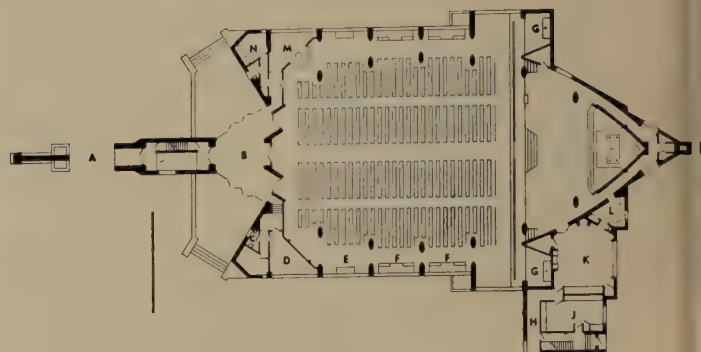


CHURCH OF SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER, Kansas City, Missouri

Barry Byrne, architect

Joseph B. Shaughnessy, associate architect

Alfonso lanelli, collaborating artist



Key to plans. A, porch. B, narthex. C and D, mothers' room. E, shrine. F, confessionals. G, side altars. H, passage to rectory. J, boys' sacristy. K, priests' sacristy. L, work sacristy. M, baptistry. N, ushers. R, choir.

See article by John Holly Scanton on page 62.



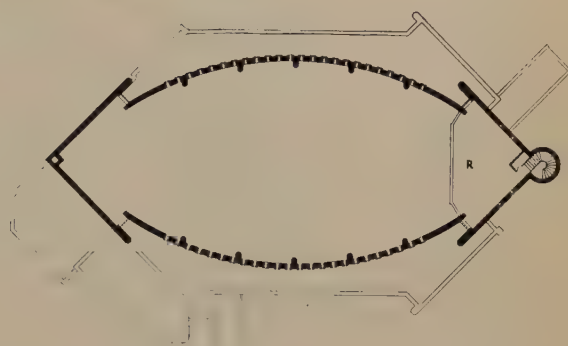
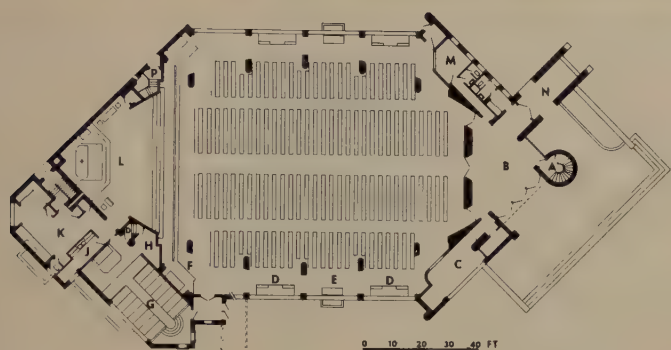
The architect states: "A Catholic church is primarily a space in which, first, the priest can offer the eucharistic liturgy; and second, the congregation can assemble and participate in this offering. A church structure has value insofar as it is harmonious with the idea of the liturgy, and to the degree it accentuates it and is favorable to the congregation's participation in it."



CHURCH OF SAINT COLUMBA Saint Paul, Minnesota

Barry Byrne, architect

Both churches have symbolic aptness. Superficial characteristics—the rounding of this surface or the detailed handling of that entrance—may please some and offend others, but the fundamental architectural approach is the important thing.



Key to plans. A, tower. B, narthex. C, baptistry. D, confessionals. E, shrine. F, side altars. G, Lady chapel. H, organ space. J, work sacristy. K, priests' sacristy. L, sanctuary. M, mothers' room. N, porch. P, to boiler room. R, choir.





Photos A. C. Cooper, Ltd.

Roy de Maistre exhibited his paintings in Australia (where he was born) in 1917 and at the Royal Academy in 1922. He was awarded the Society of Artists' traveling scholarship in 1923 and exhibited in the Salon in Paris in 1924. His first one-man show was in London in 1929, since which there have been representative exhibitions of his work at Temple Newsam, Leeds, in 1943, and at the Art Gallery, Birmingham, in 1946.

See this painter's remarks in Iris Contay's article, page 71.

ROY DE MAISTRE

ENGLAND



two, to find in them a common quality. (Illustrations on page 68.)

Deeper than the joyful pride and the gratitude of the congregation, deeper than the physical beauty of the church, there is a powerful current of significance. This building is not only a house of worship, but it is also the architect's manner of expressing an idea. Down across the vast sweep of history, turning over the thousand pages in which men have written of themselves, some deeds stand great. The art of men is their foremost legacy. Art, not in the stuffy, restricted sense so popular to-day, but art that recognizes the truth and beauty of hands and eyes and mind shaping a little spot of God's creation into a thing of ordered, comprehensible beauty, whether the result be the scar of the plow or the harmony of a chord or the bulk of a mason's wall.

We have art to-day, an art of vast quantity, but it is unfortunate that the *arts of the Church* have diminished both in form and kind. The fraction of subject matter currently directed toward God in creative endeavor is in nearly directly inverse ratio to that of the mid-fifteenth century. The creative art of our day is ninety percent commercial and ten percent religious; in the past this ratio was reversed.

The church of St. Francis Xavier is only one of the many indications that

artistic form as we know it is in an evolution, though it is not so much dying as being remoulded to a higher purpose. That purpose is the praise of God. It matters not if the form is new and different, perhaps even a little remote from our experience. It does matter that art, as every product of man's life, is a prayer and that we as a people and a culture should dedicate what we have produced as a prayer to Him, "Te Deum laudamus." A carpenter at his bench, a composer at his piano, both are praying a prayer of the same potential power. One is not envious of the other or imitative, nor should we as a society imitate the prayer-art of our predecessors, but rather offer to God our own artistic attainments. We must not begin with the assumption that other ages have better expressed prayer in artistic creations and that the best we can do is an imitation of their work. Rather we must take time to contemplate His nature and evaluate our own ability to praise it. We must cease leaning on the models of praise of ages of firmer faith and strengthen our own faith by development of an artistic expression in buildings and other art forms, an expression which is weighty with possibilities. With the possible exception of the white-spired New England type church and the California Missions, there has not been produced in this country an architectural style

that may be representative. Pastors and parishioners alike have too long accepted as ideal the imitations of architectural expression from the Europe of a long since dead age. The massive, overwhelming beauty of Chartres or Rheims are never-to-be duplicated achievements of another age. We here, to-day in America, are shaping a direction in the art of architecture as adapted to science and achievement in both engineering and materials. It is unfortunate that together with the astounding efficiency and adaptability of materials and techniques, creativeness in church buildings should have suffered so unnecessary a stagnation. The same regret must be expressed regarding the mass production of "standard" and often meritless paintings and statues which has brought religious art to a level of indifferent mediocrity. The remedy to this state of affairs is in our hands. The people of Saint Francis Xavier parish have turned the hand. We may hope that one of the deepest and most subtle significances of the spirit behind the building of this church in Kansas City is the fact that it is another step in the quickening march of the world toward a new culture, a culture in which God again will be the keystone, in which all phases of human activity, from economics to art, will be fundamentally Christocentric.

Contemporary Religious Art in England

It is not money, it is courage that is lacking

IRIS CONLAY

RELIGIOUS art? Does it exist to-day?" That is the kind of attitude you might meet in England if, as a visitor, you asked a guest at random at a party where examples of contemporary sacred art could be seen. Of course there are interesting, if isolated, works all over

the country, but very few people (and this includes church people of all denominations) take enough interest in the subject to know where they are to be found.

Because it seemed important to get a better sense of direction in respect to

these things and to try to learn how such a deep repose might be shaken into activity, four people, for whom the religious arts were of real personal interest, met together in London to have a cosy evening talking about the future possibilities. The four: Artist: Roy de

* *Roy de Maistre*. Exhibited his paintings in Australia (where he was born) in 1917 and at the Royal Academy in 1922. He was awarded the Society of Artists traveling scholarship in 1923 and exhibited in the salon in Paris in 1924. His first one-man show was in London in 1929, since which there have been representative exhibitions of his work at Temple Newsam, Leeds, in 1943 and at the Art Gallery, Birmingham, in 1946.

Eric Newton. Art critic of the *Sunday Times*,

London, and an artist in his own right. His article, "Modernism and Religious Art," appeared in the August, 1950, *LITURGICAL ARTS*.

Michael de la Bedoyère. Editor of the *Catholic Herald*, London; author of biographies of Lafayette, George Washington, and Baron von Hügel (coming), also of *Christian Crisis* and *Christianity in the Market Place*. Works on his newspaper from Monday to Friday; paints landscapes and portraits on his week ends.

Father Herbert Keldany says he is "interested in the wordless expression of universal truths as a special kind of prayer." Is attached to the parish of Islington, a working-class district in which the famous Sadlers Wells theatre is situated. He has traveled in Europe and America looking at churches and galleries both before and after his ordination as a priest. Was at Oxford from 1924-7 and was called to the Bar in 1930. Rome was the scene of his ordination in 1937.

Maistre, painter. Critic: Eric Newton. Editor: Michael de la Bedoyère. Priest: Father Herbert Keldany.*

We kicked off with a problem of my own.

Since listening to the conversations of visitors to the Ashley Gallery (a centre for the contemporary religious arts in London) I have learnt that people quite obviously don't see the least connection between paintings and sculpture by artists, and pictures and statues in a church. There is a terrific split in the public mind between what might be termed "gallery art" and "devotional art." Why are these two ideas so divorced? We can't really get anywhere until they are brought together again.

Roy de Maistre suggested that because there were no modern churches — building of anything but the purely utilitarian having stopped with the war — people had no chance to see modern religious art in its setting.

"Can one only put contemporary art in new churches, then?" asked Michael de la Bedoyère.

"No," countered de Maistre, "but when you do put modern art in old churches you have to be much more careful how you do it."

Eric Newton agreed with this and pointed out how styles have always been mixed successfully through the ages.

Count de la Bedoyère didn't consider this was at all the same thing. "Think," he said, "of the continuity of the art of the past. The break between the traditional and the contemporary is so very great and striking."

"It is still quite possible," answered Newton. "The thing is conditional upon the taste of the donor. In Northampton, a gothic revival church, Henry Moore's Madonna and Graham Sutherland's Crucifixion have been introduced and they fit in."

It was agreed that the lack of modern building could not excuse the lack of modern decoration in existing churches. How then could the artist be encouraged?

De Maistre: Responsibility rests with patronage. The artist who is prepared to go on for ever painting pictures for churches that never hang them must be a very rich man.

Newton: Not only a rich man but also a very obstinate one if he persists in painting works that are not bought either by the Church or by the museum or by the private patron.

De Maistre: The significance of contemporary religious art, as against

traditional religious art, is that it is not satisfied only to tell a story. The modern artist is so much more subjective than his predecessors and does not find full expression in external things.

Father Keldany saw the difficulty here and put his finger on it when he described the gulf that looms between our century and the last — a gulf which has somehow to be bridged before religious art can resume the place it once held. "The French," he said, "have been far more courageous than ourselves and have given this bridging great stimulus by not being afraid once again to employ the very best artists for church decoration, even though these artists may not be practising Christians. It is the work which counts. But this means courage," he added.

Newton wanted to know why the academic tradition was still employed so much in churches here. Where was this academic patronage to be found? In the higher ranks of the clergy?

"In all ranks of the clergy," said Bedoyère. And he went on to explain that there is no special difficulty for the priest in charge to put what he likes into his church. The bishop would approve if the congregation and the priest were both satisfied. If the congregation was shocked by its priest's choice, then certainly the bishop might veto the work.

Father Keldany told of a country parish in France where a priest recently asked Manessier to do something for his church. The work was approved by a committee in Paris and the bishop was convinced of its worth. There was only the parish to contend with. Mainly consisting of farmers and simple country folk, one might have expected consternation. Not at all. The people were delighted, liked the work enormously, and indeed were prepared to pay for it.* The priest said that his only fear was for the opinion of his neighboring clergy who would most certainly think him a lunatic. "What is needed evidently is not so much aesthetic courage as moral courage," said Father Keldany.

De Maistre observed that he had found much the same thing borne out by his own experience. That simple people have much less difficulty in understanding the abstract than those with a little education.

Everyone felt that the "shock period" was one which could be lived down, given time. Newton said that when the Northampton Madonna was first put into the church, the local paper came

out with two pictures side by side. On the one hand the Moore Madonna and on the other what was described as a normal or an ordinary Madonna. The second picture was of some *art nouveau* product and had its own distortions which must have worried quite as many people when it was first made as the Moore was supposed to be doing now. Yet the convention had been accepted and the distortions now were no longer even noticed.

BEDOYÈRE then enquired of Father Keldany if it were true that the clergy are simply not interested in the whole question of the religious arts. He agreed that on the whole they weren't. The subject was considered a luxury.

De Maistre: And in the building of new churches, are modern designs never considered?

Father Keldany: Hardly ever. Most churches are very stereotyped.

De Maistre: But in Holland this is not so. There are plenty of new churches there.

Father Keldany: Yes, and in France, Italy, Switzerland, everywhere on the Continent.

Bedoyère: Here there are no funds so the construction has to be as simple as possible. Just a mere box.

Newton: Even a box can be modern.

De Maistre: Is then bad architecture cheaper than good?

Father Keldany: In a sense, yes. In any case, not only is there no money for churches — it has all to go to schools; but there are no government permits either for church building, even of the plainest kind.

Bedoyère: And if there were money and permits, would there be any taste to ensure what was built would be good?

Newton: It might well be worse.

Having reached such depressive levels, the conversation turned away from the contemplation of building which doesn't exist and reverted to more fundamental questions. Bedoyère asked if someone could explain what the modern artist is aiming at. He didn't seem to link up with any tradition. In earlier ages, the artist worked against a background of known and understood tradition. Now he works wholly as an individualist. That is surely one of the reasons why the public finds it so difficult to respond. How is this problem to be tackled? he asked. And turning to

* An illustrated article by this French priest will appear in this magazine.

De Maistre, he confronted him with a direct question about his work. "Do you see a link between your work and the past, or do you feel yourself working alone?"

De Maistre said that he had no feeling of working alone and certainly felt part of a tradition. To him it was always surprising that people did not understand his works easily, but he had learnt to realise that very few ideas were ever received directly. They came filtered through the brains and experience of others, second-hand, third-hand, or fourth-hand, through reading, through listening-in, etc.

Father Keldany thought that most people found it too great a responsibility to perceive through all the labyrinth of things offered what is the permanent thing. Art, after all, is for all time, and it is important to make a lasting choice.

"Awfully few artists are permanent," observed de Maistre.

"Yet there do seem to have been times when the artist was set at the right angle, so to speak," said Newton. "At those periods it was as though he could do nothing wrong, and almost anything anyone commissioned then was worth having. At other times it appears just the reverse. While at good times artists could knock things off with ease, now someone like Henry Moore has to think for months."

SOMEONE then asked Newton if he thought our time was wrong for religious art. But he thought it quite certainly was not wrong. What was wrong, he said, was the materialism of the nineteenth century which cut all art away from spiritual things. The way artists saw things then was not a spiritual way and the patron of church arts, finding that it was no good employing the best artists of his time, like Monet or Manet, turned to other sources. The patron has lost the habit of employing artists for sacred art since the last century. This habit has got to be acquired again. Churchmen have forgotten the artist. We have got to look forward to the churchmen going back again to the artist.

"Is it just a habit lost?" asked Bedoyère. "Isn't it partly the fault of the artist that the churchman is not encouraged to go to him? Can't the artist be a bit simpler? Can't he help by explaining a bit? It is necessary that his work become social and communal again before the Church can accept it. The ordinary person just hasn't a clue

to help him understand the work of many modern artists."

This plea for simplification is one which came up again later in the conversation. In the meanwhile it was suggested that the patron was badly in need of education. "What about summer schools for clergy?" inquired Newton.

"That has been begun on the Continent," said Father Keldany, "I have been to a conference of French clergy where the main part of the week was devoted to theological questions. At the end it was given out that religious art would occupy the rest of the period, and those not interested were free to go. At least half stayed and listened and argued into the question with great feeling."

"Just what is the prejudice against modern sacred art?" Newton enquired at this stage. "That it is ugly and not Christian in spirit?" It seemed, the meeting agreed, that it was hated both as art and as being undevotional.

Here Bedoyère returned to the artist. "Isn't there any *via media*?" he asked again. "After all, the purpose of religious art is to praise God and to help the people. The problem is practical. What is needed is something instructional. Why can't the artist understand this and produce the kind of thing that is understandable?"

"What you ask is certainly not right, and probably not possible. You want the artist to play to the gallery," said Newton.

"Didn't the renaissance artists do that? Didn't they give the patron and the people what they asked for, richness and excitement and drama? But the thing about it was that they did it jolly well," continued Bedoyère.

"No, that is not the right way of looking at it," Newton answered. "The patron has every right to say to the artist you have all the wrong ideas about the Crucifixion, but he has no right to say anything about aesthetics."

It seemed to Father Keldany that the lack of adaptability in the artist came from a lack of practice. Without any commissions, the artist never gets the chance to develop fully his ideas. The problem seemed to him economic.

"It certainly is," said de Maistre feelingly, "I have been painting religious pictures for six years without any commissions, and I can't afford to go on for ever." (See illustrations page 70.)

It was then suggested that the critic and the gallery director were largely to blame for not sufficiently educating the public to appreciate the right things,

but Newton did not agree that the critic had such power. . . . You can take the horse to water, etc. . . . "I've always said pretty much what I feel," he said, "and I'm willing to go on saying it. Iris Conlay is willing to go on exhibiting. . . ."

Bedoyère thought that familiarity was one of the keys of the problem. The more people see a work of art, the more its influence gradually permeates. Otherwise there would be very little except snob-value to account for the amazing popularity of the exhibitions held after the war of Matisse, Picasso, and Van Gogh. Everyone had seen reproductions and were familiar with at least some works of these artists. "Van Gogh has given us something to work on in secular art. There is a real link there with the past. But there has been nothing for religious art to link itself with."

"El Greco is a good link," de Maistre suggested. "If we put El Grecos into our churches, would people say what they do about their contemporaries? What do they say in Spain?"

"They don't have El Grecos in the churches of Spain," said Father Keldany.

"You aren't suggesting artificial stepping stones to modern art, are you?" Newton was shocked at the turn of the conversation, and Bedoyère went back to the familiarity-theme, observing that he believed if people could buy reproductions, the taste for the originals might filter through more quickly.

Father Keldany agreed with him. "Basically, pounds, shillings, and pence is the difficulty. And funk. Some people find it very difficult to take a line, they don't trust their own judgment. The patron who had taste and could afford to experiment has gone. He doesn't exist any more. Where he did, there is progression still. Take Monsignor Celso Costantini who was in charge of the missions in China. He was a man of taste, and he encouraged the native arts. He was responsible for the missionary exhibition in Rome last year, and jolly good it was. The other exhibition of Western art had no single organising head, and it was a great failure."

THERE was a pause in the conversation for a few minutes, as though the antagonists were retiring from the front line to re-sharpen their weapons, and then Bedoyère asked if it were not more difficult to fit painting into churches than sculpture.

Newton did not think there should be any more difficulty. "The artist can adapt his work to fit the space to be filled. The easel picture is not the right thing, but because the modern painter is conditioned to paint small works to fit modern flats, it does not follow that he cannot paint on the grand scale if desired. In fact, he usually prefers to work on the grand scale."

Father Keldany: Does the artist find commissions stimulating?

Newton: Yes, certainly he does. The tradition of church painting has been broken, but there never was a time more favorable to its renewal. At last we have emerged from the age when the external appearance was all that interested the artist. Now he is all for inner significance.

Father Keldany: It is for others now to harness the artist to the patron again.

Bedoyère: True. But this art of significance is so difficult. The old art was narrative so that everyone could understand it.

Newton: Not at all. Much of it was a great emotional punch below the belt. Take the main apse of Monreale. There is little narrative there. Just rows of glowing hierarchic figures.

Bedoyère: We don't need visual arts as we did in those days. The modern man is conditioned by reading.

Newton: Right. Well, narrative art is out, and emotional art is in.

Bedoyère: I still think that artists and critics ought to recognize the difficulties.

At this point someone said how absurd this conversation would be in France. Such difficulties are non-existent in France.

"Ah," said Newton, "but France is different. In France they understand art as we understand football."

"Well, whatever you say, I maintain that the artist must be a little more amenable," Bedoyère went on.

"Just for a bit," teased Newton.

"The poor plebs are always left out of these arguments," Bedoyère persisted. "What has to be found are some easy lessons to the understanding of modern art."

"There is no learning without tears, you know," said Newton.

"But isn't it quite possible for a good artist to be completely sincere, and yet keep an eye on what the ordinary chap understands, and give it to him?" went on the unconvinced Bedoyère.

BUT de Maistre didn't see why the artist should talk down to the public.

"For the good of others," said Bedoyère. "Everyone else can simplify himself, even the poet, certainly lecturers. The artist puts an awful ultimatum to everyone. Take it or leave it."

"But there are gradations of artist, some more difficult than others. You are free," said de Maistre, "to choose the work that suits you."

Newton thought that in a tradition there would be more elasticity. Now that the trickle of talent is shallow and the gap narrow, variations are fewer. "Don't let us forget, though," he added, "that there is an aristocracy of taste."

De Maistre: "I don't believe in art for the masses anyway. It is not possible to be all things to all men."

Newton: "We push taste down slowly from the top. What we must see is that the barriers that prevent it sinking through quickly are made as thin as possible."

SINCE Miss Conlay missed Father Martin D'Arcy in London, the editor caught him in New York. The following are Father D'Arcy's remarks concerning the conversation.*

"Like so many discussions, this one ends without complete agreement or any clear solution to a problem which is serious. Art and religion are too seldom on happy terms to-day. All would like to see the old alliance renewed. We must, however, at the beginning, distinguish two questions which are not the same. The one is: how can religious taste be improved? The second is: can and should modern art be used in, for example, churches? These are clearly not the same. In music good hymns and good hymn tunes are being substituted for the tawdry ones which have been in vogue; liturgical services are being revived and, at high mass, some of the more theatrical composers have been ousted.

"Bad taste may yield to good, but the trouble is that this does not necessarily mean work for the artist to-day, and it is a sad condition, at least for the artist, if not for the Church, when he cannot find commissions of this kind. As was pointed out in the discussion, there are several reasons for the lack of appreciation of modern work. One is the devotional side of religious worship. Here the appeal is to emotions which are easily evoked. Even the famous scholar now packs a thriller or detective story in his baggage, and just because the tempo of life is so fast, and the imper-

sonal and technical so rampant in every form of living, there has to be perhaps a sensational art to provide a compensation. This art must be obvious and trade on what is customary and sentimental. Now modern art does not provide cushions, and it is often the enemy of the conventional. However, and this is usually mentioned by the artists themselves, there is much that is bad in modern work, and there are no old types or models to which to refer for comparison. Both the educated and uneducated Christians suffer from an atrophied taste; it is long since any good tradition was alive. Many, however, think that they have at least a sense of what is fitting for the services of religion, and they have this to say for themselves that there is a heritage of symbols and appropriate theological expressions which help to define what forms can correspond with the attributes of God and the mysteries of Christ and His Mother and all the saints. The artist, on the other hand, is often like a Yankee at the court of King Arthur. He flounders about breaking all the rules.

"For these reasons, I think the artist must soak himself in the atmosphere of Christian art and belief. Then a real alliance may become possible and the religious public won over to a genuine liking. The outlook does not seem to me pessimistic. Artists are naturally impatient at delays and frustration, but there are many signs scattered about of a coming spring."



Drawing by Jean Chariot

SALESMAN: *I think the bishop will like it. I see nothing functional about it.*

* Father Martin D'Arcy, S.J., was formerly provincial of the English province of the Society of Jesus and master and rector of Campion Hall, Oxford. He is the author of *Death and Life, Belief and Reason, Thomas Aquinas, The Nature of Belief, The Mind and Heart of Love.*

The Editor's Diary: II

SEPTEMBER 3, 1950. The delegates to the first international congress of Catholic artists were received in special audience at Castal Gondolfo, at 5 p.m. The Holy Father read a statement on art — in French. (The translation appeared in the November, 1950, issue of LITURGICAL ARTS.) Then he spoke to a number of us: a few words to each with the knack of making you feel that you are the only one at the moment. It seemed to me that, in addition to the delegates, quite a few “ringers” managed to get through. Later the Holy Father appeared on the balcony high above the courtyard and spoke — in six or seven languages — to delegations of Boy Scouts. Asked questions and received resounding replies. There is a delightful familiarity about these audiences; the Swiss guards are good natured and long suffering but, once in a while, an officious monsignore will “pull his weight” a bit, trying to keep order, and put a few obstreperous characters in their place.

September 4, 1950. Father A. P. Huysmans, rector of Saint Franciscus-Gasthus, Gilze, Holland, promised to write a short article for us. He is the priest whom the fire-eating Gaston Bardet, of the French delegation, accused of heresy, no less, because Father Huysmans suggested a difference between theology and art. Theology is fine as a guide, but Bardet's idea was that the theologians should establish rules, and that is when Father Huysmans and many others disagreed with him, with the result given in my report in last November's issue.

September 5, 1950. Miss Clare Sheridan phoned from the Hotel San Sepulcro, via della Conciliazione. Otto Spaeth and I called, and we then visited the four basilicas to gain the Holy Year indulgence. I doubt that the European ways, at least the Roman ways, in church would ever be popular here, but it was a relief to be able to wander around these basilicas without being bothered by fixed pews or ushers who crook their little finger and settle you in one spot whether you want to go there or not! Miss Sheridan seemed a little puzzled, but pleasantly so by the gen-

eral informality and behavior of all the national groups wandering about, singing hymns in their own tongue and usually led by their clergy. We were all truly in our Father's house! The impression I had formed of Miss Sheridan, because of her article (*Into the Church through Art*, May, 1949, issue of LA) and her photograph was enhanced at meeting her in Rome. She is full of vitality and conversational charm. Nothing would please me more than to hear that a pastor in this country has asked her to execute a statue. There would not be any trouble about “modernism” and the job would be first rate. This hint might bear results!

September 6, 1950. Mass audience in Saint Peter's. Many student groups. Fifty thousand in the great church and eighty thousand outside. Thanks to a friend in the Vatican, Otto Spaeth and I had choice places near the altar of the Confession — a few feet from the throne erected there for the Holy Father. While waiting for the Pope, various sections of the crowd would sing hymns — the effect was wonderful. Then the great moment came when, at the far end of the church, the white figure of the Holy Father appeared, on the *sedia gestatoria*. Then the procession, with Roman dignitaries and noble guards, came down the central aisle (the Pope blessing the throng, leaning far out, right and left), around the great altar, then back to the throne. There the Holy Father again blessed the great crowds and spoke a few words in French, Italian, German, Spanish, English. Then he read the long list of student groups present, and was wildly cheered each time as he waved an acknowledgement. Truly the “father of his flock,” as he strives to make us all realize that he is speaking to each personally. This vast audience in Saint Peter's is like many audiences rolled into one. Before ascending the *sedia gestatoria* (and how cleverly it is handled by the eight scarlet-coated attendants!) the Holy Father chatted with the bishops and anyone who could get near him. Little by little, the noble guards and the Swiss guards are swamped by all who want to speak to the Pope, and he does not make matters any easier for

his attendants, since he is eager to please everyone and seems to enjoy the general air of amiable confusion. How the frail man that is Pius XII can stand the strain is still a puzzle to me! Then back on the *sedia gestatoria* and the procession again begins, followed by the bishops. At a signal, the bishops and guards stopped and when the Holy Father reached the front door, he rose from the throne and with arms outstretched in an all-embracing gesture he blessed all present — an unforgettable moment! Later I was told the Holy Father appeared on the balcony facing the great plaza and again blessed the world.

September 10, 1950. Arrived (Venice) last evening by plane from Rome. An uncomfortable hour and a half trip, as the plane flew high and the cabin was not pressurized — I think that is the term. Settled down for the night at the sumptuous Gritti Palace Hotel on the Grand Canal. Two nights there and I moved to the less pretentious but quite adequate Hotel Europa. But my short stay at the Gritti Palace satisfied one of those bothersome suppressed desires I have had for years — to stay overnight at a really first-rate caravansera and have dinner on a gently swaying “front porch” on the Grand Canal.

September 11, 1950. Preliminary meeting concerning the Island of San Giorgio project, with Count Cini's man-Friday, Professor Eugenio Bacchion, Otto Spaeth, Father Reginaldo Grossi (who had prepared the American participation at the congress of Catholic artists) and Father Valentino Vecchi, a secretary of the Patriarch of Venice and a most engaging and amiable young priest. The plan is to transform the island into an international school of arts and general culture for talented but poor boys from all nations. We took a gondola ride to the island to get an idea of the layout and particularly to see the Tintoretto paintings in the church. But we reached the island around noon and the three Benedictine Fathers now in charge refused to answer the bell and we saw nothing. It seems it was not the proper hour for these sons of Saint Benedict to be disturbed! Later we called on

Count Cini at his Grand Canal palazzo and discussed the main ideas of the plan, based on the Count's desire to do something as a memorial following the death of his aviator son. Although we experienced the usual language difficulties, we understood that Count Cini was prepared to finance the reconstruction of buildings on the island to house a colony of talented boys from all over the world, regardless of race, creed, or color — a thoroughly lay activity. Since the Island is now in the hands of the Italian Army, it will need some action from the Italian Parliament, but the Count, a Senator, said it was merely a matter of time. Father Grossi will write up the story for LA, and Count Cini gave me excellent photographs to be used as illustrations.

Later Fathers Grossi and Vecchi, Otto Spaeth, and I called on the Patriarch of Venice, Archbishop Carlo Agostini. Father Grossi explained the purpose of our visit and the plan for the transformation of the Island of San Giorgio, and the Patriarch was most sympathetic. Both the Archbishop and the Count have a great deal of personality and charm.

September 12, 1950. Father Vecchi guided me around Venice. He is a native of Venice and an ideal guide. He gave me photographs of paintings shown at the Saint Vidal liturgical exhibit and one of the silversmith exhibitors, Umberto Rosa, gave me photos of his work — among them a very fine, modern-design ciborium in silver. Rosa's craftsmanship is incredible. Then we visited the Schola of S. Rocco — Tintoretto's by the dozen. These huge paintings are ideally exhibited, and here, as in Rome, the architects have shown great ability in designing the space for exhibitions. Much of the success of the mission art show in Rome was due to the planning and "isolation" of each country's contribution. Father Vecchi knows the byways and canals of Venice, and I found myself in most interesting spots without realizing at all how I got there.

September 12, 1950. Visited the Academia and saw Veronese's gigantic "Last Supper" which caused his trouble with the Inquisition. Hardly a Christian conception of the event, and the Inquisitors were probably worried by the many details which seemed to have little to do with the subject matter. The whole story can easily be found in any good book about Veronese. The Aca-

demia is filled with masterpieces — Giovanni Bellini, Piero della Francesca, Giorgione, Andrea Mantegna, Hans Memling, Jacopo da Montagnana, Bonifacio de Pitati, and many others. A "Landscape with Monks Praying," by Alessandro Magnasco (no 746) is very interesting; it seemed to me to foreshadow the beginnings of impressionism. And this brings up a point which concerns Father Douaire and his fear that students from the United States who might be admitted to the school on the Island of San Giorgio would not get the needed guidance from present day Venetian masters at the Academia. He fears that the weight of past glories would militate against creative work. I am inclined to be optimistic in the matter; painters like Cadorin and Cereña are good men. The trick would be to send students of sufficient maturity and character to be able to get the benefit of tradition without stifling their own talent.

September 13, 1950. Roamed around the Cafe Florian, on Saint Mark's Square, where, in 1920, I had coffee with golden bubbles. Perhaps Florian's have changed their coffee recipe since that time, as there are no longer any bubbles, golden or otherwise. But the orchestra is still as enjoyable and the pigeons just as numerous.

September 13, 1950. Visited the *Biennale* show (International Exposition of Contemporary Art). My general impression can best be summed up by saying that the great number of paintings represented a cockeyed world, particularly the "socially-conscious" Mexicans and Brazilians. I was under the impression that this was a show of works of recent years, but many countries exhibited works dating back to 1906, and England safely centered its exhibit on Constable. The best show, it seemed to me, was that of the seventy painters, mostly Venetian, who exhibited in the gallery on Saint Mark's Square. The theme was *work*. This was financed by a wealthy Italian brick contractor who personally picked the artists whose efforts interested him. In general it would seem that the best shows are those in which *one mind* is the guiding hand, as opposed to the committee shows where clashing interests and rivalries have to be placated, which usually results in deadly compromise. The communist influence and the fear of its ideology is reflected in the *Biennale*, and the result is some-

what of a hodge-podge. But I did find a *Pietà* by Guido Cadorin, reproduced with one other painting by the same artist on page 63 in this issue.

September 14, 1950. Took the boat ride to Torcello to see the mosaics. We did not stop at Murano because the glass works were closed. We did stop at the island of Burano for a half hour and visited the school of lace making conducted by the nuns. About forty small girls were gathered in one large room, dutifully copying stock designs and turning out good work, but we all felt the prices asked were high; for example, eleven thousand lire (\$17.00) for a small handkerchief about six inches square. Some were shocked by what they thought was child labor and perhaps it was by American standards, but these little girls, by Italian standards, are being prepared for married life and motherhood and this training at sewing will be valuable later on. It is the age-old controversy; production for profit and money-making versus preparation for later life in the raw.

Torcello is a rather inaccessible place; a dusty half hour's walk from the boat landing — but what a reward when you finally stand in the church and see the mosaics at either end! Their preservation is remarkable and the general design unequalled. Here is where you can realize that the best of the modern work in abstract design joins the past — far beyond the renaissance. The immense blue Virgin and Child in the apse, so much "out of scale," but fitting so well in the golden background, is sufficient refutation of those who insist on "authentic" anatomical likeness. Anyone who has seen the mosaics at Ravenna, Venice, Monreale, Palermo, and Torcello, will have little patience with those who scorn the best in modern art.

September 15, 1950. Came to Milan this morning by the early 7.10 train from Venice and settled down at the Albergo Touring — a hotel that claims to be the last word, but is really third rate. One luxury, however, is a sizable bathroom. Visited the Duomo (Milan Cathedral), an enormous interior with a remarkable architectural pastry exterior. But the new bronze doors now being installed promise to be of definite interest.

The church of San Ambrogio is the best here, an ideal plan and fourth century architecture. Here it was that

Saint Ambrose's preaching converted Saint Augustine; you can still see Saint Ambrose's throne and pulpit. In the crypt below are the remains of Saint Ambrose and Saints Gervasius and Prothasius.

The great artistic treasure in the church is the bejewelled and enamelled antependium of repoussé gold and silver which covers the four sides of the main altar, under the well-known baldachino. This four-faced antependium is normally covered by a steel-casing and the sacristan must use several keys to open it. With such a treasure, it is ironic to see the awful, cheap-looking and badly-designed fabric antependium that is ordinarily used. It would be possible to produce such an antependium in this country — possibly using mosaics or marble or petrified wood or gold or silver or precious stones. A generous donor and a sympathetic bishop could do the job.

While looking at the tomb of Saint Charles Borromeo in the crypt of the cathedral, I wondered at the fact that the saint's liturgical directives are so consistently violated in Italy, even in the saint's own cathedral. We may be too strict in such matters in the US, but the Italians certainly take an elastic and convenient view of the whole business.

One of the sights of Milan is the glass-covered arcade which connects the square of the Duomo and that in which Leonardo da Vinci stands on his pedestal facing the Scala Theatre. In this four-pronged passage, in the late afternoon, crowds of men stand around, talking and gesticulating, something like the crowds in the New York garment district at lunch time. They must transact business of some sort, but the only comment a friendly French-speaking waiter could offer was: "They just stand there and talk." Another equally vague book dealer remarked: "They must be pilgrims on their way to Rome."

September 17, 1950. Reached Chamonix at 8.30 p.m., having left Milan at 6 a.m. A very tiresome train ride, a change at Turin.

Excellent accommodations at the Hotel Carlton, and from my window I can see Mont-Blanc — a wonderful concentration of snow-capped mountains and beautiful scenery.

Next morning on to Assy to see the much talked-about church. (See February, 1950, issue.)

Recent Publications

THE HOLY BIBLE. Edited by the Reverend John P. O'Connell. New Testament and Psalms in the Confraternity Text; Old Testament in the Douay-Challoner Text. Illustrations by James Joseph Jacques Tissot. Chicago: the Catholic Press. \$25.00.

As far as the text portion is concerned, this volume is incomparably the best so far made available for family use in English. There may be those who do not like the "Confraternity" version for stylistic reasons, yet for clarity to modern American readers it is probably the wisest choice, and the object of this edition is clearly to reach a very wide public. What is particularly useful is the apparatus supplied along with the text: the three modern encyclicals on the Scriptures; bibliographies of papal documents on the same subject; a copious Catholic Dictionary chiefly — but not exclusively — dealing with biblical matters; a good, simple commentary on the Mass; a brief account of the rosary; excellent "geographical charts" and chronological tables. Had the book's producers stopped with this, we could only have praised them for a job exceedingly well done.

They chose, however, to gild the lily, and in doing so they came within the special purview of this periodical. Since the excellence of their achievement in so many ways will doubtless produce a large circulation for their product, it seems all the more imperative that an adequate critique of the "adornment" they have furnished their text appear somewhere in the Catholic press. On the "artistic" side — and be it noted that except for typography there is no impelling reason why an edition of the Bible should have an artistic side — what they have given the public is not merely in dubious taste (taste, after all, is always arguable); it falsifies the very basic spirit both of the religion of Israel and of Christianity. This is a serious charge, and if made must be substantiated. That I shall attempt to do.

Be it said at once that, like everything directly connected with the text, the typography of the "Holy Family Edition of the Catholic Bible" is sound and well-conceived. Its pages are physically pleasant and easy to read. The sheer bulk of the book is perhaps unfortunate; it weighs over five pounds. But this could only have been remedied either by making it into two volumes or by omitting the illustrations. When this

has been said, everything favorable has been said.

The other "artistic" elements are numerous. They are: the binding; the illuminated presentation, title, and family record pages; the portraits of three popes; the pen and ink sketches accompanying the Old Testament and New Testament charts and chronologies and the accounts of the rosary and the mass; a set of stations of the cross; and, finally, and by far the most important, the colored reproductions of the Tissot paintings. Let us consider these in order.

The binding is of limp leatherette with overhanging edges, stamped in gold. This type of binding was and is useful to the Bible-brandishing type of Protestant preacher, who finds a limp volume better suited to his needs than something with stiff covers. It certainly is not suited to a book of as large format as this, and it at once conveys a feeling of awkwardness. Such a book simply won't do on a bookshelf, and on a table it gives the appearance rather of an ornament than of an object of daily use. The design stamped on the front cover reminds one of a high school or college year book; the best that can be said of it is that it is amateurish.

The illuminations appearing on the title, family record, and presentation pages are so far removed from the wonderful products of love and skill which adorned the margins of even the least interesting mediaeval volumes that the less about them the better. At least they are harmless — and quite superfluous. The portraits of the popes likewise are harmless. Yet why, Oh why, not have used photographs, when such fine ones exist for all three of the pontiffs in question? The little pen and ink drawings which accompany the charts and the accounts of the mass and rosary are a trifle better. They are effective enough for their purpose — the sort of thing one expects in a school text book.

At last we come to the stations of the cross and the Tissot pictures — the hundreds of pages of color reproduction which must have added tremendously to this Bible's cost and which I believe are positively harmful. I cannot find any indication of who is responsible for the stations, although I feel certain I have seen them before. They look like productions of the nineteenth century German school of religious art, painted with an eye to the "chromo" market. We have become so inured to such things that we mercifully pay little attention to them. It is enough to say that

Our Lord is garbed in spotless baby-pink and wears a blue mantle, with the Virgin in exactly matching colors.

There remains the *pièce de résistance*, the Tissot water colors. There are more than a hundred pages of these, many hundreds of individual paintings. A casual examination of them might lead to the conclusion that they constitute at worst a harmless luxury, at best a colorful eye-catcher which might cause the unsophisticated to examine not only the pictures but — a most desirable thing — the text which presumably inspired the pictures. Here, however, is the rub.

Tissot was a French painter of the last half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. He lived through a period when the well-to-do on the Continent and in England were consistently well-to-do, liked crowded display, loved the picturesque, and were willing to spend money to indulge their tastes. It was above all the era of "conspicuous waste." A family showed its prosperity by covering its tables with bibelots, filling its lawns with cast-iron animals, curtaining its windows with lace, and covering its walls with "colorful" and "picturesque" and "charming" paintings (hand painted by hand by a famous artist). Poverty was viewed by all right-thinking people as either a disgrace or a visitation for sin. Charity, as Léon Bloy has so vitriolically made us aware, was supported by "bazaars." It was for such patrons that successful artists painted, Tissot among them. Bedouin encampments, gipsy girls, scenes in the harem; rural sunsets, "the stag at bay," cathedrals in twilight, peasants at prayer; everything that was remote enough not to trouble the conscience, everything that could be suffused with a rosy glow: the lovely old legends, Great Moments in literature — such was the acceptable fare. Pain, dirt, degrading poverty, and the triumph of the spirit over such things were disturbing, socialistic, repulsive. What was more, "good" painting had to carry an appearance of realism; the objects depicted had to look "real." This does not mean that the whole composition need bear any resemblance to anything that had ever happened on land or sea, but merely that one could pick out the men for men, the women for women, the horses for horses, the water jugs for water jugs. And if the subject were "exotic," then the individual objects, while remaining recognizable, must also be "exotic." As far as the personages

were concerned, this need mean no more than that they wore very few clothes, or wore simple draperies in place of Victorian costumes.

It was in and for this society, then, that Tissot decided to do his Bible paintings and journeyed to the Holy Land to get "local color." What earthly good the "local color" of a poverty-stricken and semi-arid Turkish province in the nineteenth century could do for a painter aspiring to illustrate the Bible, concerned with a period when that same country was a "land of milk and honey," when its culture was wholly different, its monuments intact, its people a proud nation, is a little difficult to understand. At best, he could have got a feel for the lay of the land and for the older portions of Jerusalem. In any case, after his return home, Tissot went to work and toiled with admirable industry to produce hundreds of pictures illustrating scenes of the Old and New Testaments — precisely in the style of his contemporaries' Bedouin girls, harem women, and Arab sheiks. The moral magnificence of the Prophets turned into weirdly costumed, beautifully bearded gentlemen wearing immaculate garments and gesturing in the most approved theatrical fashion; the same could be said of all the other characters, save that their clothing might be scantier if equally immaculate.

The New Testament pictures follow the same formula. The lepers look like well men wearing bandages for a fancy-dress party; everything is immaculate once more. It is colorful, picturesque, and, whenever possible, charming. The atmosphere is no different, say, than that required in good children's illustrations for "Sinbad the Sailor." What then has become of the sinful, soiled world Our Lord came to redeem? What becomes of Christ's intense humanity and His divine dignity? We see a brooding, poetic figure, parading and gesticulating in garments of spotless white, with hair well brilliantined and beard trimmed to perfection, and the larger scale scenes of the Passion could teach Cecil B. DeMille a few tricks. It is all fairy-story stuff, "sissy" stuff for adolescents, for adults who know no better, a sweet, consoling dream. And to resurrect this rose-tinted vapor in a day when we have lived and live in the shadow of horror seems to me to deform our Faith. But perhaps the simple truth is that the Bible is, as a whole, quite beyond illustrating.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

WINGLESS PEGASUS: A HANDBOOK FOR ART CRITICS. By George Boas. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. \$3.50.

Some years ago Dr George Boas published *A Primer for Critics*, a slim book which has slowly been gaining a larger and more admiring audience. In the preface to the present volume, *Wingless Pegasus*, the author explains that it is "conceived in the same spirit and dedicated to the same end" as that of the first; with further amplification and more evidence the writer again attempts "to analyse and describe accurately the problems which critics of the arts would face if they took their problems seriously." The book is more than a handbook for critics, being also a guide for those of the general public interested in art and in ideas who are tired of drinking watered intellectual wine.

Beginning with a careful examination of concepts and terms that are important as a general background to the study — for example, behavior and rise of novelty — Dr Boas then discusses and defines terms closer to the core of ordinary aesthetics, such as, value, artistry, form.

Most of *Wingless Pegasus* is concerned with illustrations and evidence elaborating and supporting all that Dr Boas defines and declares; practically every major contention is backed up and exemplified by instances drawn not only from the various arts but from the history of ideas and the sciences of anthropology and psychology as well.

By this cautious documentary treatment of aesthetic principles, Dr Boas underlines the fact, which he recognizes at the beginning, that his attitude "toward the arts and toward artistry is both pluralistic and relativistic"; the first qualification accounts for his denial of the view that all the arts are created for the same purpose and valued for the same reason, and the second term explains his belief in "the reality of time, location, history, multiplicity, and change" in the arts.

The doubly qualified attitude with which Dr Boas considers the study of aesthetics results in other challenging conclusions; perhaps the most significant example, at least for critics, to whom the book is partly directed, is that which confines the critic to "explanation, interpretation, analysis" and denies him the right of "blaming, legislation, and evaluation." Whether or not one agrees with this point of view or with the other ideas expressed in the

book, one should hesitate before attempting their refutation and should realize that a considerable amount of equally strong and varied evidence must be summoned before the refutation is to be even moderately successful.

Wingless Pegasus seems a relatively digressive, often repetitious, and sometimes pedantic discussion of aesthetics, but it is also an important and extraordinary one. More often than not the author reaches his conclusions clearly and strikingly; he offers ideas that are generally interesting and formidable and facts that are often exciting and enlightening. Because Dr Boas offers us his wine straight, one wants to taste it again and often.

ANDREW W. ROBERTS,
The Johns Hopkins University

ART AND BEAUTY. By Maurice DeWulf. Translated by Sister Mary Gonzaga Udell, O.P. Saint Louis: B. Herder Book Company. \$3.00.

Maurice DeWulf delivered to the general public at Poitiers in France the lectures which he first published under the title *L'oeuvre d'art et la beauté*. Those lectures, re-edited in 1943, are printed in English translation for the first time in the book under review.

The translator, Sister Mary Gonzaga, is to be highly complimented both for her fidelity to her original and her skill in rendering into English M. DeWulf's idiomatic and sometimes ornate prose. The reader is seldom if ever conscious of reading a translation. The Herder Book Company are likewise to be congratulated for turning out a very well made book.

Much has been written on art and beauty since DeWulf gave these lectures. The reader will, therefore, not expect the author to deal with authentic problems which only these later writings have brought to the fore. Moreover, profound convulsions in twentieth century thought have so altered the preoccupations of the philosophically-minded since 1915 that philosophical theories to the refutation of which DeWulf devotes considerable space have now rather more historical than contemporary interest.

Bearing in mind, on the one hand, that DeWulf proposed to deal with the work of art (*l'oeuvre d'art*), not the virtue of art, and, on the other hand, that these lectures do not constitute a technical philosophical treatise on the subject, but belong to the class of writings so aptly called "*oeuvres de haute vulgari-*

zation," one should not look in these pages for a deep metaphysical or epistemological analysis of the Thomistic theories of "habitus" and "knowledge by connaturality," nor should one demand a more profound treatment of the psychological and, generally speaking, philosophical aspects of the subject than a non-technical but broadly cultivated audience might be presumed to follow in a public lecture.

What the reader is entitled to expect, however — and he will not be disappointed — is a most interesting book analysing the genesis, nature, and end of a work of art; i.e. answers to the questions: Who produces the work of art? In what does it consist? What purpose does it serve? written by a man of great erudition, philosophical competence, extraordinary sensitivity, and unquestionable eloquence. The wealth of illustration by reference to great masterpieces of painting, sculpture, architecture, and music gives vitality to the discussion of the underlying philosophy, and the charm of the author's style reveals the artist at work.

My personal recommendation of this translation of Maurice DeWulf's lectures to the readers of LITURGICAL ARTS may be dictated by my own personal experience in reading its pages; from almost every page I seemed to hear the echo of delightful chats with DeWulf when, as a student at Louvain, I walked and talked with him about *L'oeuvre d'art*. Nevertheless, I think that those who read the words of Maurice DeWulf's in Sister Mary Gonzaga's excellent translation will not fail to share in that experience.

GERALD B. PHELAN,
Director, the Mediaeval Institute
University of Notre Dame

SCULPTURE IN WOOD. By John Rood. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. \$5.00.

In the foreword of this book John Rood writes: "One never hears anyone say I like cake but I don't understand it. People eat cake, usually enjoy it without knowing or even thinking what ingredients or thought went into its making. Perhaps the analogy of a cake and a work of art may seem rather far-fetched, but is it?"

To this reviewer the analogy is not so far-fetched. However, one must assume that the cake in question is a good cake. Made by an experienced and qualified cake maker. Should the cake fall flat or otherwise fail to measure up to a rea-

sonably acceptable standard, it is usually thrown away.

Mr Rood's book is largely designed to interest, instruct, and encourage the aspiring neophyte in wood sculpture. Perhaps that fact restrained Mr Rood from pointing out that a good many early student efforts should at least be kept out of sight. John Rood's own work has that effortless quality which characterizes all fine sculpture in wood. He makes it look easy. He makes it sound easy. The beginner should realize this at the start. It will help him over the many bumps and disappointments he is sure to experience, no matter with how much latent talent he may be endowed.

But whether you aspire to make your mark on a chunk of wood or not, the reading of this book will prove a profitable and enjoyable adventure. From its pages and fine illustrations a man of deep spiritual understanding emerges, a man truly worth reading about and knowing, a fine artist . . . John Rood.

ALBERT WOOD,
Port Washington, Long Island

Correspondence

San Francisco, California
To the Editor of LITURGICAL ARTS.
Dear Sir:

Permit me to make a few remarks. You are fighting a good fight, no doubt about it, but it seems to me that you are still a little in the clouds. What the pastor needs is to know where to turn when he wants to improve the furniture of the church already built: reredos, statues, stations of the cross, etc. So far the only place they can find these objects are in the stores of so-called religious art and we know what a disgrace they are. You have reproduced in the magazine some paintings and sculpture which are not made for veneration.

Who will have the courage to put in his church a painting like "The Disciples of Emmaus" or "The Adoration of the Magi" by Daniel O'Neill? Or a mosaic by Elsa Schmid? (November, 1950, issue) Or a Pietà by Sybil Kennedy or one by Robert Cook? (August, 1950, issue). They may be great artists but their work cannot enter our churches.

To me these works are monstrosities, but my opinion does not mean anything. The important mission is to put under the eyes of the people works of art before which they can pray.

Can you not start a centre for artists of smaller fame but who have more respect for the human form? After all human forms are not improved by distortion.

Yours truly,
(Reverend) LUIGI SCIOCCHETTI

Dear Father Sciocchetti:

Frankly, I have been under the impression that I have had my feet on the ground and that pastors could find many suggestions in any issue of our quarterly. I realize that those pastors who are seeking ready-made statues and the like are in a quandary, since there does not exist the firm which would provide the type of thing you evidently have in mind. The potential client must deal with the individual artist, but that seems to me to be a good thing.

Whether some of the paintings and statues which have been reproduced in the magazine are "not made for veneration" is a matter for discussion, but they would not be included if I were not convinced that they are fit for veneration. But you put your finger on the sore spot of the matter when you write "Who will have the courage . . . ?" That is precisely the point, *courage!* By the way, Elsa Schmid's mosaics, illustrated in the last issue, have been in a New Haven, Connecticut, church for many years.

In the February 23 issue of the *Commonweal*, Father Gerald Vann, O.P., in his article "Catholic Journalism," writes: "We Catholics have long suffered from debased art-forms, in our statues, in our paintings, and so on; if you continue to purvey that sort of stuff, on the grounds that you are 'giving the public what it wants,' you sin against truth. But just as years of 'modern' advertising have made the principles of cubism familiar and acceptable to everybody, though at its birth it was such caviar to the general, so in the same sort of way, patient years of work can induce a new apprehension among Catholic readers of what is and what is not a 'holy picture.'" Is it not possible that many of the *people* do not find much to *venerate* in too many of our churches and are ready to accept much of what is done by many of our artists, including those whose work is illustrated in the magazine?

As far as it is within my power, I try to make LITURGICAL ARTS the *centre* of which you speak and the work of many artists of "smaller fame" has first appeared in the magazine. Indeed some

of these artists have secured commissions in this manner.

Art in general, and religious art in particular, is ever a subject for controversy but we can at least meet on common ground when we agree that the usual product must be gradually replaced by much better work. It may be that the humanism of the renaissance, which nurtured a deadly realism, is at the root of much of our trouble.

Yours truly,
MAURICE LAVANOUX

Brooklyn, New York

To the Editor of LITURGICAL ARTS.

Dear Sir:

As the magazine of your society is read by many young architectural students interested in church art and architecture, I am submitting this "open letter" in the hope that such students may benefit from the advice offered by your organization.

I refer to your acceptance of an invitation by Mr Olindo Grossi, chairman of the department of architecture at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, to visit the school and give an opinion on two student theses on church projects, one of them being my own. The opinions offered were most constructive and represent a good example of only one of the many very helpful activities of the Liturgical Arts Society. At that time, I had mentioned my intention to study at the school of art at Fontainebleau, France, and I am thankful for the hints you gave me concerning various examples of liturgical art and architecture in Europe. These involved both historical and contemporary examples, and in four months I was fortunate to be able to visit and photograph many of them.

Although my visit was entirely too short even to begin to understand and appreciate all of European church art and architecture, I could not help being greatly impressed by the spirit and the freshness of contemporary works. Those designed for concrete were particularly impressive. These included such churches as Notre Dame du Raincy and Sainte Thérèse at Montmagny, both located near Paris and designed by Auguste Perret, and Notre Dame de la Trinité, at Blois, designed by Rouvière. These and many other similarly constructed churches in Switzerland, Germany, and Italy demonstrated the suitability of the medium of reinforced concrete for church buildings — a medium which has yet to be as fully developed for

churches in this country as it has been in Europe.

I close with thanks and appreciation and best wishes for the continued success of the Liturgical Arts Society's programme.

Yours truly,
S. C. VALASTRO

Charlotte, North Carolina

To the Editor of LITURGICAL ARTS.

Dear Sir:

May I tell you how much your visit to the Mint Museum's exhibition of religious art — past and present — meant. There have been many appreciative comments also since your talk on the liturgical arts.

Your help in compiling the exhibition is keenly appreciated, and the names of the contemporary artists furnished to us by you helped immeasurably in getting together an exhibition of significance.

Our exhibition included works of religious significance from renaissance times, loaned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art through the American Federation of Art; the important El Greco, loaned by the John and Mable Ringling Museum, Sarasota, Florida, and many contemporary paintings and sculptures loaned through the Liturgical Arts Society and directly from the artists, from a list supplied by you.

The exhibition was sponsored by a group of prominent Catholic laymen in this area, headed by Mr Leo Malloy. It was seen by more than 4500 persons during the period of March 4-25.

Charlotte is a Protestant city; the Catholic population small. It is significant that this group should sponsor such an exhibition. It focused attention appropriately during the Lenten and Easter season on the rôle that the arts of the past have played, and the eagerness with which to-day's artists stand ready to continue to fill the visual need of religious thought and expression. The exhibition proved that to-day's artists are capable of continuing unbroken the thread of praise and worship, maintaining the traditional thought, though expressed in to-day's art idiom and materials.

It is my hope that exhibitions of this nature can be sponsored by many art museums and that such an exhibition may become an annual event in Charlotte.

Yours truly,
JOSEPH SHIELDS HUTCHISON,
Director, the Mint Museum of Art.



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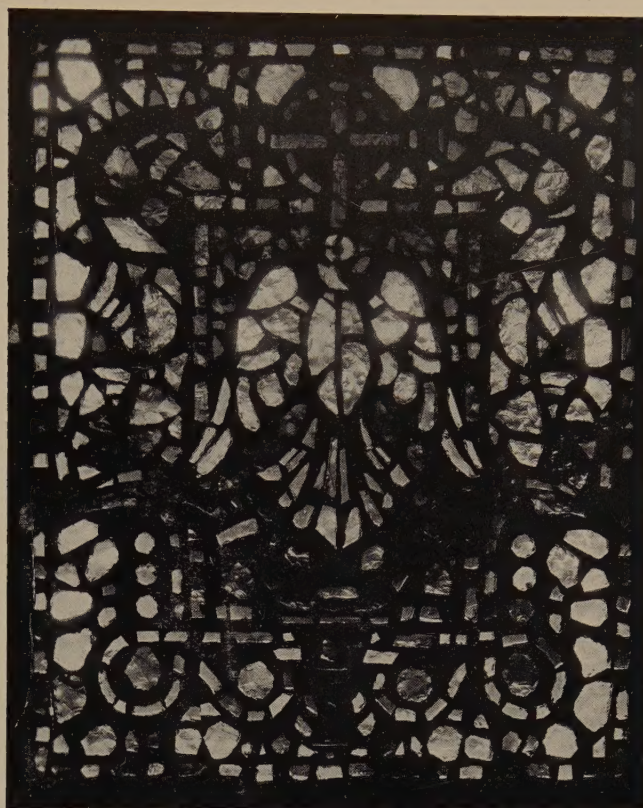


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One of the glass windows in Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Church, Essington, Penna., by Gabriel Loire, Chartres, France. (Heavy cast glass embedded in cement)

VESTMENTS • ALTAR LINENS

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THE REVEREND FRANCIS L. HUB

pastor

FRANK J. RICKER

architect

JOHN P. DONOVAN

builder



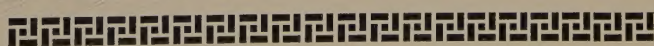
Mr. Loire is represented in the United States by:

IMPORTSALES

incorporated

150 East 35 Street, New York 16, N.Y.

(Murray Hill 5-9594)



An Opportunity

THE SPLENDOR OF THE LITURGY of the Catholic Church calls for the use of the finest fabrics in the design and making of vestments.

- Due to certain circumstances in the recent past we have come to accept shoddy and 'imitation' material as the norm.
- The universal element in the arts at the service of the Church can lead us to encourage talent and workmanship of a high order wherever found in the world.
- The opportunity to encourage and sponsor such talent now comes to us from Japan. Exquisite hand-woven textiles which, for centuries, robed Buddhist priests and Noh dancers, are being turned to the use of Catholic ritual by weavers in ancient Kyoto.
- A Maryknoll missionary, Father L. H. Tibesar, is responsible for this impetus and new direction and a Dominican nun, Sister M. Clare, of the Dominican Convent, Mission San Jose, California, is the keystone of the effort in the United States.
- Takeharu Teramoto, of the Weavers' Guild, in Kyoto, is the master responsible for this turning point in the work of these artists.
- The opportunity offered the West should not be allowed to die.
- We urge all who seek beauty in the House of God, and particularly at the altar, to further the plans and hopes of these Japanese weavers.

For further information or samples write to: Mr. Takeharu Teramoto, Kyoto-shi, Kamikyo-ku, Murasikino-Kamitsukiyama cho 33 Japan, or, Sister M. Clare, O.P., Siena Studio, Mission San Jose, California.

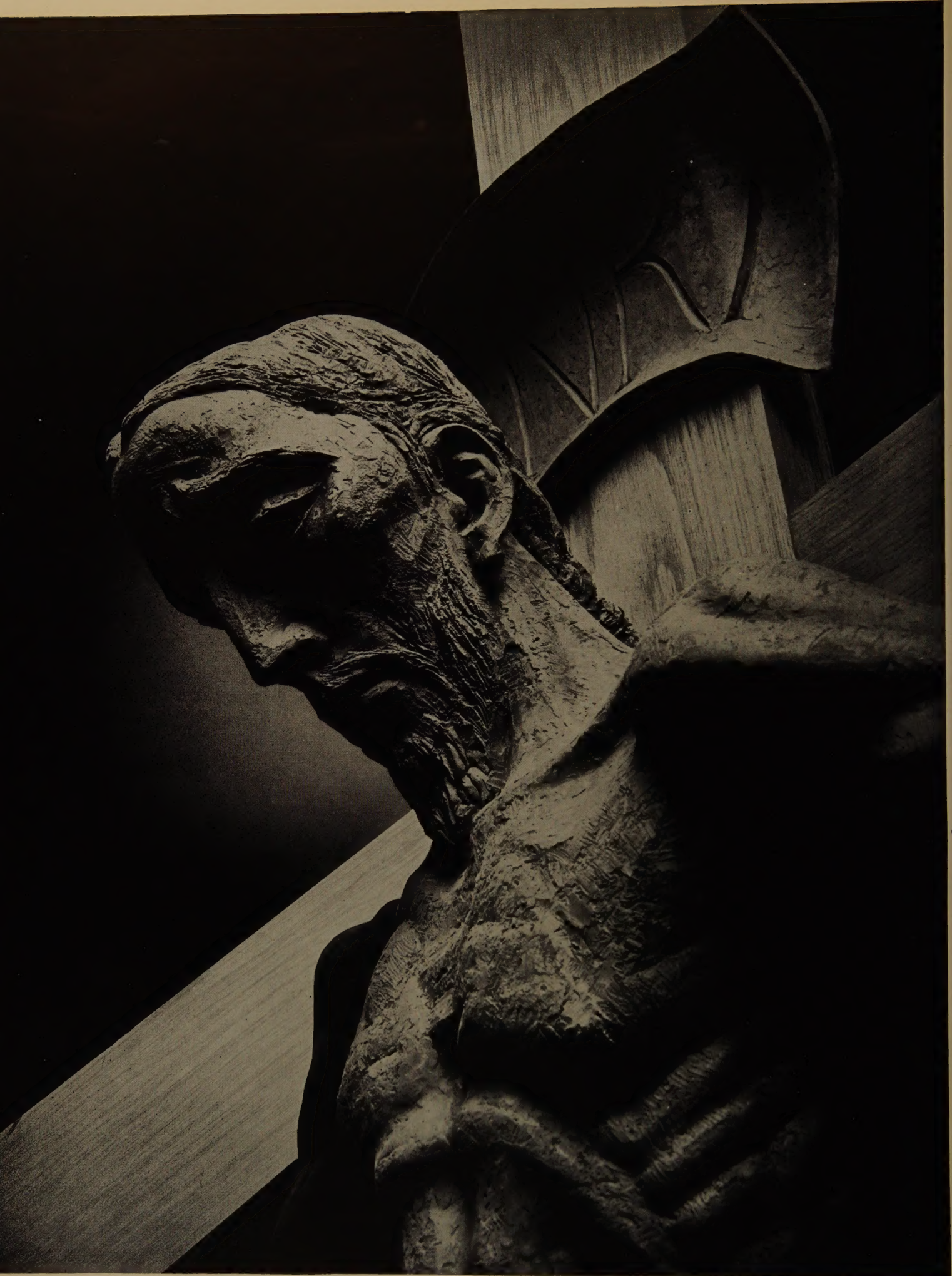


Photo Koen

DETAIL OF CRUCIFIX, CAST IN ALUMINUM, FOR THE MAIN ENTRANCE OF
SAINT MARK'S CHURCH, BURLINGTON, VERMONT. CHARLES UMLAUF, SCULPTOR

(See page 104 for complete Crucifix)